WE ARE SHERMAN'S MEN

THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF HENRY ORENDORFF

BY WILLIAM M. ANDERSON

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For Anna Marie

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Introduction

Despite the passage of over a century of time, the opportunity to read and study nearly 200 personal letters describing a soldier's experience in the American Civil War provides unusual insight to the person and the rank and file of the Union army.

Like most Civil War soldiers, Henry H. Orendorff was an agrarian born February 21, 1840, on a farm in Orion Township, Fulton County, Illinois. He and his brother John enlisted together on August 20, 1862, in the 103rd Illinois Infantry, their unit later being designated Company F. At the time and according to his own personal description, he was: "Age 22 eyes grey hair light pretty good nose thick lips weight 122 lbs gross ears lopping Beard not so light as hair legs 31½ in long & straight arms small boots peged."[1]

Henry's correspondence reveals a delightful sense of humor and the reader can almost feel the twinkle in his eyes when he writes: "Some of the Slaves are whiter than I am."[2]

Not unlike many Illinois soldiers, Henry Orendorff was a racist. Yet he was pro-administration, read the Republican biased *Canton Weekly Register* and strongly opposed the Copperhead movement. Support for the war was a key issue in the 103rd Illinois as Copperheadism flourished in Fulton County and Henry's convictions were even challenged by peace advocates among his relatives who resided in Bloomington, Illinois.

All soldiers longed for news from home. Believing that you get mail by priming the pump, Henry corresponded with his family at the rate of over one letter a week throughout his thirty-four-month military service. Nearly every letter expressed his appreciation for being remembered with correspondence and an appeal to keep the letters coming. When correspondence fell off from certain family members, he was quick to chide them for their neglect. He frequently sent more than one letter addressed to different relatives in the same envelope and ensured their delivery by sending them with a comrade on his way home. Typical of the time, Henry assumed that his correspondence would be passed among members of the family. Being an excellent reporter, he provided lots of information about the health and whereabouts of "the boys."

The youngest child of John and Margaret Orendorff, Henry's family included three brothers and two sisters; Washington, Caroline, William J., John W., and Sarah Margaret. Although he wrote to "everyone," his mainstays were brother William and his fondest sibling, Maggie. Henry and Maggie shared a special relationship.

As with any soldier, Henry experienced numerous mood changes. At one point he wrote at the end of a brief letter: "I love my country I am fighting for my country I am getting sad."[3] Near the end of the war with spirits buoyed by the inevitability of victory, he expressed unbounded confidence in his military leader stating: "Sherman dont know the word Cant."[4] Similarly when the general sparred with the secretary of war over surrender terms, he wrote: "I tell you we

are Shermans men and feel for him and will stand by him to the last."[5]

Orendorff was wounded twice yet served his entire enlistment gaining rank as sergeant and ultimately a first lieutenant's commission as the war ended.

The 103rd Illinois, popularly known as the Fulton Regiment, recruited nearly all of its members from Fulton County. Also, unlike many Civil War regiments, the 103rd was led by a cadre of experienced officers who had served previously in several other Illinois units. Orendorff's regiment performed a secondary role in the Vicksburg Campaign, were involved in following up that great victory, saw its heaviest action at Missionary Ridge and the Atlanta Campaign and participated in the march through the Carolinas. Those who died during their war experience numbered 219.

Following the conflict, Henry Orendorff and several comrades jointly compiled the regiment's history entitled *Reminiscences of the Civil War From Diaries of Members of The 103d Illinois Volunteer Infantry*. It is evident that Henry made little use of his own correspondence in this work. The excellent diary of Captain, later Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Wills, comprises about two-thirds of the narrative.

Henry remained single until after the war marrying Ann Eliza Piper of Canton in 1869. The first Mrs. Orendorff died after twenty-nine years of marriage and he then wedded Margaret Maynard, also a Canton resident. The first marriage produced one child, a daughter Nellie Charity.

After returning to civilian life, Henry Orendorff completed a commercial course of study in Chicago and began a lifelong career in business, first as an employee of Parlin & Orendorff Plow Works then later as owner and manager of a hardware and farm implement company in Canton.

He remained very active in the local GAR post until his death on January 7, 1910. Henry Orendorff had been a full participant in a war to save the Union, in his community business, and in the Grand Army of the Republic. The GAR eulogy expressed his central role: "No one can fill his place."[6]

The editor has endeavored to preserve the style and composition of the original correspondence: only very minor editorial changes were made. Frequently when punctuation was missing spaces were inserted to foster meaning. Although some of the personal and commonplace comments were eliminated, the humanness of these letters has been maintained. These deletions are indicated by ellipses. Occasionally Orendorff mentioned persons that could not be identified, particularly young ladies back home in Fulton County.

Notes

[1] Henry Orendorff communication addressed to "Dear Sir," September 4, 1862.
[2] Henry Orendorff letter to William J. Orendorff, January 5, 1865.
[3] Undated Henry Orendorff letter to "Father Mother Bros. & Sisters."
[4] Henry Orendorff letter to Maggie Orendorff, November 10, 1864.
[5] Henry Orendorff letter to William J. Orendorff, June 3, 1865.
[6] *In Memoriam*: H. H. Orendorff, January, 1910.

Henry Orendorff's Civil War. (map)

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1
I Am Soldering

Camp Peoria, Sept 7th 1862

Dear Friends

I take the present opportunity to address you a few lines; we got in Camp about 10 o'clock last night; Camp looked rather dreary at first but we was shown our barraks & got a light and borrowed some straw from other barracks and was soon ready to bunk; We were ready for roll call about daylight; S. N. Rockhold[1] and I got pass at 7 A.M. for three hours we went down to some of the other camps: Two regiments left here this morning for Louisville Ky they left without their bounty; I saw little A. D. Addis this morning he and Harrison are in the 77th Reg[2] the boys all feel well to day We had preaching this morning at 11 A.M. Rev Peterson[3] preached to us his text was 1st vers 133d Psalm. I slep good last night & feel first rait to-day. I guess I will not get to go up-town for a day or two; John[4] seems to feel about right. We have cover enough, our nest was composed of S.N. Rockhold D.A. Snyder Wm Gibson[5] John & my self, Tell Washington to get Samuells blanket and send with mine.[6] No more at present

Yours etc. H. H. Orendorff

P S When you write direct your letter Peoria 103d Care Capt Vandevender.[7]

Monday morning Sept 8th

we had what is called a meeting of the Young-Mens Christian Association last night & Prayer meeting in the barracks afterwards, I was detailed to work last evening after supper We had supper at 4 P.M. Send some butter when you have an opportunity.

Camp Peoria Sept 11th 1862

Sarah[8]

It is with pleasure I will attempt to interest you for a few minutes. We have been in camp for four days & I like it very well so far, the rain bothered us a little last night; I was put on guard Tuesday at 9 A.M. & I was off yesterday at 9 A.M. I went on & thought it was fun for the first turns the 3rd turn came on a 1 o'clock at night I thought it a long time until 3 A.M.; two hours don't seem verry long in day-time but it seems longer at night. We are all well except one of Capt Posts men by the name of Houston he is affected in the throat someway.[9] Their was considerable excitement in camp this eavening caused by a receipt muster Roll brought in by our officers[10] Some of the boys signed it. I told them that I wasent a going to sign a blank receipt until I enquired into it further.

Sarah you wanted to know how our barracks were made They are made out

of lumber 12 feet long with one end on the ground the tops coming together in the shape of a house roof they are about 75 or 100 yards long; one barrack is calculated to accomodate a company of 100 men. We divided off in 5 messes of 20 each our mess is no 2 about all of the Canton boys are in our mess We hired a cook today we pay him 50 cts pr month I tell you the cooks have a pretty hard time. We had it pretty hard for a few meals Some times we had meat & bred & coffee and sometimes nothing but bred & coffee without sugar bred & coffee is rather slim rations especially coffee without sugar. We have pleanty now lots of coffee & always a little sugar & most splendid bread.

Some of our boys are singing & some of them are talking & some are laughing & swearing.

We have meeting of night when the weather is pleasant held by the young men's Christian Association of Peoria. Services are conducted generally by Mr. Reynolds of the firm N. T. C. Moor[11] was buying pork for last winter John new him first sight. The Boys have just Paid Thornburg[12] a compliment for buying two chickens We had them for dinner the compliment was paid in the way of a ballaid. I tell you it makes fun for the boys I like our 2d Lieutenant first rait he is pretty good drill master[13] he makes the boys toe the mark.

Sarah please excuse my poorly composed & badly written letter I would like to know how any body could write good or compose when there is so much confusion and fun going on

I am very respectfully your brother

H H. Orendorff

P.S. Sara don't come to see us until we get our uniform I tell you we are a rough looking set. I will write as soon as we get our uniform Please write Soon and Oblige your Bro

Camp Peoria Sept 14th 1862

Dear Sister

Sabbath evening 5½ o cl P.M. this has been a long day to me We had preaching this morning I forget the ministers name he preached rather a poor sermon he had a good text but I must confess I have forgotten it.

Sarah in regard to those collars I like them verry well they are excellent S.N. Rockhold says he would like to have some like them, John says he wont wear anny collars I like them much. I wish you would get some flannel at Pipers[14] and make me two pairs of drawers so that I can get them when I come home on furlough We drawed our Over Coats last night I like them verry well. Sarah dont work too much for us for we are verry comfortable now. We draw full rations now We draw fresh beef Tuesdays Thursdays & Saturdays & old shoulders the rest of the week sundays excepted. Sugar, Coffee, hominy Potatoes Beans Pees rice etc. We feel verry thankful for the good things that you & Caroline & Mary sent us.[15]

The worst of it is I have to stand guard tonight I feel pretty well though. Samuel Rockhold is rather under the weather today dont tell his folks though. Sarah dont send me anny more white shirts or white collars I have got collars enough to last me a month I havent worn a fine shirt since I came up here I can get along until next week without them things that I sent home to have washed. I will have to quit as it is almost time for me to report at the guard house I will finish this in the morning.

Monday morning 6½ oc

I came off guard at 7 O'c this morning. I wont have to stand guard anny more this week unless we have double guard some of our boys got rather unruly & we had to put on the former detail. Sarah dont come to see us until I come home or write for you to come I cant think of anything of importance to write so I will close asking you to remember me to all the young ladies & Bros & Sister Caroline especially. Oh! I forgot to tell you to tell Mother not to cry or fret about us we enjoy ourselves very much. I am as ever your Brother

H H. Orendorff

Camp Peoria Sept 23d 1862

Dear Sister.

Wm Parlin and Mr. Goshnell[16] arrived safe with them good things, I tell you good things are highly appreciated by us soldiers. I guess I will send a few dirty clothes Home. I am all right this week, I was not verry well last week, Mr John Proctor[17] was out to Camp last Sunday I had a short talk with him he asked me why I dident come up to his Bros, and see them some time, I told him I was too rough to go anny place, he laughed at me & said shaw. We dont get much privilege anny more they keep us verry close. They let us that is they let three in the fore noon & three in the after noon passes & it dont come my turn verry often. It is just hard to tell when I will get a furlough I guess not until week after next

How does Mother feel about us Boys tell her that we have good times up here. Wedns, morn At roll call last night I was detailed for guard I have just reported I come on the 2d relief the second relief go on at 11 O clock A.M. & stay on until 1 Oc PM then we are off 4 hours & on two & so on until 9 AM O clock to-morrow. We are then dismissed.

Sarah tell Mr Pools folks that they have a cousin in our company by name of Rea.[18] I am sorry to hear that Washington is not verry well I hope he is better by this time. When you write to Cousin Libbie[19] tell her to write to me. Are you going to Bloomington this fall. There is nothing of interest in Camp but Bill Maloons[20] Wife & she dont create much intrst.

Dote Jo & Mary Lewis was here last Saturday evening they went up to the City & staid all night & came down again to camp Sunday morn I dont like them much I didnt spend much time with them. We look for Belle Bernard & Jim Shiner & Lib Rawalt[21] up to-day I hope they won come for I am on guard.

I thank you verry much for offering to wash my stockings I can do that little job my-self, Towels too.

HH Orendorff.

Sept 24th 1862 Camp Peoria

Mrs. Parlin[22]

Dear Sister I was verry glad to see your name in the rear of Sarahs Letter. That Cabbage was highly praised by everry one of our mess they all said it was the best thing we have had since we have been in Camp any thing of that kind is a gooddeal better than Cakes allthough them cookies were highly apprec by our Boys. I tell you that peach Pie tasted like being in town of Sundays. Dont Come to see us until we get our uniforms There is a rumor in Camp that we draw our uniforms to-day or to-morrow. John is all right he was on Patroll guard last night he got in a 9 Oclock PM. We drilled about 6 hours yesterday. I tell you we have good times with occasional gloomy spells Thank fortune they dont come often not mor than once a week & that is Sunday nights it goes pretty hard to spark the boys In haste your bro

Remember me to the Family

H H. Orendorff

Camp Peoria Sept 28th 1862

Dear Sister

It is the Sabbath Evening & the most lonesome of the week to us Soldiers. I was out of Camp twise to-day, I went up to town this morning & up to the fair-grounds this afternoon.

Sarah they keep us verry close now. I think we will be mustard in a verry short time. Sarah we have it rough tumble up as Bro Washington can testify. It is most awful hard to write to night the boys are having so much fun, Some are singing some are writing some are reading & some telling stories, How can any one write in such Confusion.

The boys like it all verry well except standing guard. Frank Lermond[23] is on guard to-day he hired a man to stand in his place to-night. I guess I will not get to come Home on furlough for a week or two. Sarah I have got ½ doz Photographs down town I dont know whither I will get to go after them in the morning, if I do I will send you two or three with Washington. Samuel Rockhold is quite sick with the Feaver I am in hopes he will be better soon, he is at the Hospital now, I took him some supper but he coudnt eat anny.

I wish you had been here last evening to have seen us on Review. There was five Regiments on Review I believe it was five Reg. I tell you we made quite a shine.

We have been in camp three weeks now and the time hasent seemed very long to me I tell you the days slip off quick verry quick now.

I am sorry that Sam is sick Sam is good company and carries himself verry straight.

I wish I could be Home next Sunday but I guess it cant be. I am glad you had a good time at Mrses Pipers & Smiths Remember me to Mrs Pools folks tell them that Mr Rea is allright. Sarah we have some good boys in our Company & vis-eversa. I will quit as it is most time for roll call and the wind blows the candle most awful I will try and write a little in the morning if I get time. . . .

H H Orendorff

Camp Peoria Oct 18th/62

Miss S.M Orendorff

Saturday morning having a little time I thought I would try & interest you for a few minutes. I am well & are most of my Comrades Mr Wm Post[24] from our company is in the Hospital he has the fever James-Dilts[25] is in the hospital I dont know what is the matter with him I think he has the fever. We have good times inclusive on double quick We havent got marching orders yet I was up in Town last night I went to the Fulton & Peoria Houses[26] and looked on the Regt to see if Bro Wm had Come At the Peoria House I found Cousin Quintus Orendorffs[27] name Reg I dont know him & consequently dident find him, I wrote a note and left it with the Clerk he said he would see that he got it. I havent much of interest to write, since you was here I have received some thing that would do your eyes good to look at I call it bean chiffull. . . .

H H Orendorff

Camp Peoria Oct 26th 1862

Friends at home

John & I are well and enjoying ourselves very well, It has been pretty cold for a few days, in camp; we got a stove in our mess day before yasterday & put it up & filled it with wood & soon had it pleasant in our mess; yasterday we got a few bushels of coal; & the rest of the messes in our barracks got up stoves yester-day so it was verry pleasant in our barracks last night. We sleep verry comfortable of nights John, John Wise[28] & I sleep togather, we have a comfort under us & 3 or 4 blankets over us so you may guess we sleep warm. We dont drill much when it is so cold we wer out on batallion drill yasterday afternoon a little while & had dress perade this is about all the drill we have had for 2 or 3 days. We were out on inspection this morning we had our knapsacks packed & Over Coats straped on this is the first time we have been out with our knapsacks on they seem pretty hevey but I guess we will get used to them by the time we go on a

few long marches. . . . Our boys are buisy writing letters today some of them declare they wont write home anny more until they get a letter, Michael Augustin[29] may be found among that class and John Wise he John Wise is most Home sick I guess he will get over it he married a Miss Sherwood a sister to the school mam.

John was out on Patroll last night he was acting sargeant he dident catch anny boddy; Our Col is getting pretty strict he has boys standing on the box at beat no 1 a most every day & some times he has boards tied on their back telling what they have done. I tell you we have some pretty hard boys in the 103d Reg. . . . There is a rumor in camp that we will leave the first of this week, we are getting quite anxious to leave Camp Peoria.

I must close as I am about run ashore for annything more to write,

H H. Orendorff

Bolivar Tenn. Nov 2d 1862

Friends it is with pleasure I now seat myself under the shade of a large Ash tree in the Land of Dixie to write to you We arrived here at 11 Oclock P.M. yasterday or (last night) We mad the trip in about 50 hours. We started from Peoria about 5 oclock Thursday Eavening & got to Cairo about 7 oclock Friday night & laid their until one oclock & then took a Boat for Columbus Ky we arrived at Columbus a little before daylight we unloded the boat & loaded our bagage on the cars & started for Jackson about 9 OC Saturday morning at & got to Jackson about 7 OC in the eavening their we got off and staid their 2 or 3 hours but dident unload our baggage. Samuel Rockhold & I went and found Benjamin[30] he is well & hearty as a buck I think he will be down to see us in a few days.

We had a very pleasent time coming through, I dident sleep much on the cars the first night but maid it up the next. We got aboard of the boat at Cairo about one OC in the night & thought we wer going to lay their until morning Wm Gibson, Walker Moss[31] & I laid down to gather & being tiard we soon fell a sleep & when we woke up they wer hollowing for us to go ashore We looked around and found that we wer at Columbus I never slept so bully in my life before. Well we got in here last night & unloaded we had severall army wagons & two ambulanse wagons or carriages. Capt Van. S. W. R.[32] & I jumped in one of the ambulance wagons & soon went to sleep.

We find it warm & very pleasent down here we dont want our coats on down here through the day but it is quite cool through the nights. I am verry well with the exception of slight coald which I had before I left Peoria. We find it verry poor country all along the road from Columbus down here the most of it is hevey timber & generally flat & the watter poor. I like the Mississippi watter the best of anny watter we have had since we left Peoria it is riley but it tastes good the Ohio is clearer but I dont like it so well. I drank some watter that was get out of the Hatchie River that was verry good. We are within about a mile of the Hatchie

River. The 17th Ill Reg is here I saw Thee Monger[33] he is well the 7th Calvalry is here allso I went down & saw the boys John Shryw[34] & the rest of them are well.

I understood that part of the 42 is here I will find out if it is so I will try & hunt Jessie Hoag.[35] Their is about 25 or 30 thousand troops here I understand & they are still pouring in I tell you it is lively times down here. . . .

I am Soldering
H H. Orendorff

my sheet is not very clean I aint either. To Sarah. Do you want me to send you a black Boy if you do write or give my love to Father & Mother & accep a little for you & sister Parlin

Camp in the Woods Near Lagrange Tenn
Nov 10th 1862

Miss S M Orendorff

Dear Sister I will try & write you a few lines this lovely morning, John & I are both well & enjoying ourselves well Our comrads are generally well the most of us have colds to some extent I have a pretty bad cold since we have been in Tenn but am almost well of it now. I tell you we have been put through since we left Camp Peoria, I believe I wrote home from Bollivar Nov 2d we left Bollivar the 3d & marched about 10 miles the 4th we came the rest of the way to Lagrange, the distance from Bollivar to Lagrange is 22 miles we wer pretty tiard when we got to Lagrange allthough we left our kanpsacks behinde & havent got them yet but think they will come in to-day. We got in here about sundown last Tuesday & laid down on the leaves & took a nap after a warm nice supper of (hardtact & sow belly & soft-watter for all of the watter is soft & warm down here) course that we had carried for two days in our Haversacks. We cut brush & mad boothes Wednesday (like Father does for his Sows & pigs in the winter) we had a nice nap that night. Thursday we went out reconnoitering we went in the direction of Holly-Springs abot 10 miles when we had got about 8 miles we came on some Rebbel cavalry we formed in line of battle & throwed a few shells into them killing two & wounding one or two, they retreated & we persued them 2 miles but they out run us so we counter marched by file left & came back to camp, we dident start until 12 N. so that made 20 miles we marched that afternoon though we dident get in camp until 8 OC. P.M. We rested Friday & ate Persimmons & Horse corne rosted as Mr. Proctors little boys called it. We wer out reconnoitering Saturday in force about 2000 strong, we went in the direction of Holly Springs about 15 miles we formed in line of battle made a cup of coffee in our tins drank it felt bully began to pull grass to make a bed but was soon ordered to change our positions we moved between quarter ½ miles formed in line in a cotten field stacked arms laid down & tried to sleep but got cold so had to get up a lot of us went & got a load of rails apiece & made a fire, Moss, Miller

Charley Buck[36] and I went & got some watter & as I came back I was passing along by Co E some of the boys asked me if I had got anny yams yet I told them no they give me my hands as full as I could hold them against the front of my back & Aaddis Vanmidelsworth[37] gave me a whopper that he had rosted I went on up to Co F steeped a tin of coffee laid my yam down before the fire & kept it warm until I got my coffee ready then I got it & had a big supper about 1 O clock in the night

My paper is getting greasy so I will write with a pencil for a while. Walker Moss & I went and confiscated a lot of yams for breakfast we dont steel but confiscate

As I have got my sheet very dirty I guess I will close asking you to look over mistakes & poor writing I might write more but think I must write to cousin Esther[38] this afternoon I am on guard to-day & it is most time for me to go on. My position for writing is setting on the leaves with my back against a log & a tin pan to write on. In regard to the weather it is very warm through the day time & cold of nights quite a while frost is visible of mornings. The dust is the worst thing that we have to contend with on the march. I staid in the state of Mississippi saturday night. the county is general very poor though here it will about average with the poorest down about Lewiston.

Remember me too all the Relatives & Friends I would write about some of the boys health but they are all well & most all writing Home to-day.

Please write soon
H H. Orendorff

Sunday Eavening by Candlelight in Dixie
Legrange Tenn Nov 16th/62

Miss SM Orendorff
Dear Sister

this is Sabbath Eavening & I have some leasure time so I thought I would talk to you through the medium of the Pencil. I am well & enjoying my-self right now I will tell you how I have spent the day. I got up before day-light we had roll call & breakfast, Blacked my boots took a good wash, & then went over to the 8th Reg to see Ben R-[39] Ben, &, one of his comrades got a pass & we then went to church in Town heard an old Presbyterian - preach I think he is a secesh his text was in Psalms (I forget the spot) he preached a verry good Sermon

After church Ben & his comrad came & took dinner with me after dinner we took a stroll through town, I forgot to say that I saw some verry nice young Ladies at church & some vice versa I think they look verry neat as well as the Peoria Ladies. I saw 15 men this morning (Prisoners) that have taken the oath of allegiance to the U. S. I talked with one of them he seemed verry anxious to get Home the most of them lived in Tenn. they say they are tiard of fighting & express themselves as having verry hard times they say that they had to live on

corn bread & scant rations, they say that they have lived better since they have been prisoners than they did in the confederate Army they are not dressed in uniform at all Some have butternut & Some Sheeps-grey the latter is rather more common than the first.

Tell mother that I am well verry well John was a little unwell last week but is much better now, the health of the Reg- is good. we have not been out reconnoitering for a week, . . . we have last Tuesdays Registers.[40] in camp it does us good to look over home news. . . .

H H. Orendorff

P.S. I must write in regard to the weather

The weather is verry warm it so warm that we go in our Shirtsleeves through the day, it is about like the weather we had in the first part of September; (in Ills)

I see in the Register that Legrange is mentioned as being in the State of Mississippi which is a mistake I think it is about a half mile to Mississippi line (South of course). . . .

H H. Orendorff. no Abolitionist

I hate the Nigger I dont think I will marry anny of them

Lagrange Tenn. Nov 24th 1862

Dear Father, Mother, Bros & Sisters,

in compliance with Fathers request I will write you a few lines John, &, I are verry well and enjoy ourselves finely. Our comrads are generally well.

Samuel Rockhold stands soldiering fine So does Wm. Gibson, John, Rogers and the rest of our neighbors.[41] The 8th Regt is in camp near us Benj Rockhold was over to see us last eavening I tell you he looks hearty I think Sowbelly and Hard tact agrees with him no 1.

Since I have been writing I reed Bro Wm's letter which was read with much eagerness as it was the first we have heard from Home since we have been in Dixie We were truly glad to hear that you wer all well, Report says that our mail has been miss-carried. Probably to Memphis Tenn. . . .

We wer out on Picket Guard last Monday one week ago to day. it went off fine until about 10'clock P.M. it commenced raining and rained like fury until day - light I tell you we got a good soaking. G.M. Moss[42] and I stood from 5 A.M. to 7, when we were relieved we struck for a Negro Hut We went in and ordered a corn pone baked & steeped a cup of tea took a chunk of fresh Pork from our Haversacks that we had confiscated & boiled the night before After we had got breakfast ready we went out and got in Masses Buggy under the Shed, We cut our corn pone in too Walker took half and gave me half, I tried to eat it but it was no-go. I tell you the niggers are darn nasty. We are still at LaGrange Tenn Lagrange is 25 miles South-West of Bolivar on the Memphis and Charleston R.R. I am sure it is called Holly-Springs is 25 miles South & a little West of here it

is in our possession, the 7th Ills Cavalry are at Moscow 12 or 15 miles west of here on the R.R. Our Brigaid was out on Grand Review last Saturday Our Brigaid is composed of 41st 53d 103d & 7th Ill Cavalry the 7th were not with us of course as they were at Moscow.

We wer forming for dress-perade Saturday Eavening when we were ordered out on picket, We soon had a days rations in our Haverscak and all ready for a start We went out South-West about 3 miles put out our posts built up a good fire out of Railes and had a big time Capt Van Lynn, Gosnell and I dident let the rest of the boys sleep much.[43] We teased Michael Augustin Lieut Kelley & others until we got them most angry.[44]

I would have written yaster-day but dident get in until after dark, There was considerable firing and skirmishing going on along our lines yasterday morning but was without much if anny Serious results. I can hardly realize that we are in enemy country We lay down & sleep of nights as unconcernably as if we wer in our quiet Homes. . . .

Prices are exorbitant here butter is worth 50 cts p lb Yams $2.00 pr, bu, Tobacco 2 dollars pr lb and Sutters[45] traps exceedingly dear.

You will see by refering to the Map that Lagrange is near the Mississippi line Holly Springs is in Miss - We staid one night in Miss- When we wer out reconnoitering I most think we will find better country in Miss- than in Tenn. . . .

I like the looks of some of the Southern Ladies verry well I dont refer to the blacks ones of course I doe hate the black d-l's.

Please write Soon one & all

H. H. Orendorff

Dec 2d 1862
On Lumpkins Mills Camp in the Woods
near Watterford

Mr. W. S. Orendorff Esq

. . . We left Lagrange last Friday Nov 28th & marched in the direction of Holly-Springs 15 miles & camped for the night, Saturday morning we started early & got to Cold-watter by noon took dinner laid round until sundown & then completed the march to Holly-Springs Saturday night we had a big time confiscating, Pork, Beef, Mollasses Sugar & other things too numerous to mention, well Sunday we got to this place this is about 10 miles south verry little west of H-Springs We heard considerable firing of Artillery Sunday Eaven it seemed to be about 5 or 6 miles south probably on the Tallahatchie, R, We scraped up leaves & pitched out tents Sunday & dident have time to ditch them went to bed began to sleep big about 10 O'clock it commenced raining in torrents while the thunders roared & lightenings flasked all went well enough until after it had rained a while the watter commenced running under us I tell you it felt damp comfortable but we could sleep for all that but suddenly there came a dash or gust of wind which

hoisted out tent & the rain beat down on us glouriously we soon got tent straitened up & drove our bayonets in ground to hold her level laid down a little damper then ever slept good until day-light got up got grub went out on picket a mile & half or two miles, a fellow by name of Walters[46] & I went off along the lines after watter 1½ miles while we wer gone our lines wer drawn in & walked about 3 miles hunting our Co while we wer gone we confiscated Yams & Honney from a Secesh Captain he was wounded in Ky- & is Paroled I tell you he looks bad.

I believe we understand the confiscation Act better than old Bill Kellogg[47] when we camp we pitch right in & kill Hogs - Beef - Goats - Chickens - Turkeys Ducks but not the kind of Ducks I used to Squeese, &, eat pop-corn with Sunday nights I havent ate anny Goat yet but the boys say it is good.

It has rained almost all day a slow disagreeable rain like we have in Illinois some times. The weather has been comfertable most of the times with occasionally frosty nights when the Sun shines we want our coats off & watter to dabble in, the watter is generally soft & warm & in most parts of the country Scarce Some of our boys have walked 2 or 3 miles for watter after we have camped, - We are all well with the exception of Coldt. Washington I like the climate down here but dont like the country for several reasons first - too much timber 2d two much niggers 3d not enough watter 4th the soil is better adapted to the raising of cotton to anny thing else. Holly Springs is a verry nice place verry nice indeed. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Watterford Dec 8th 1862

Mrs. Wm Parlin

John is writing to W.S.O. so I thought I would write you a few lines John & I are well verry well I weight 148 lbs gross with my overcoat & catridge box on.

Saturday I recd letters from the boys Sarah Bro W S & Father. they seem to feel verry anxious about us & ask if we want anny thing we have more now than we can carry verry easy.

We havent got our box of good things yet they are at Lagrange I dont know when we will get it, I hope soon. We are in camp on a Side-Hill over looking a big Cypress Swamp a Swamp aint such an awful thing as you might imagine.

We staid in Holly-Springs last Friday & Saturday nights I tell you we had a big time trying to confiscate but dident make much Some of our boys got shot at by the Guard I have learned to watch the owners. We need a Regimental Surgeon verry much the one we have got aint worth a snap.

I am afraid we are going to be taken to Guard the R. R. being as we are left in the rear of of the army I hope not I had much rather be on the march than in Camp it gives us a better chance to confiscate.

John seems to enjoy himselft pretty well most of the time. I dont like the Negroes much they look nasty. I suppose Geo. V. Coe is killed or taken Prisoner Maj.

Nelson[48] was taken but made his escape I think fighting has bout played out for a time in the west depart

Your Bro
H H. Orendorff

Tell Wm to Pay the Postage on my letter or have old Cris[49] charge it to me & I will pay it when the war is over.

Waterford Miss. Dec 12th / 62

Mr. Wm H. Parlin

. . . We are well, and hearty as bucks I am sorry to say though that some of our boys are Sick John Wise and Jefferson Eyerly[50] are the only Canton boys that are sick I believe, John Wise has been verry sick but is getting better he has the Lung Fever Jeff Eyerly has a Fever of some kind I dont think he will get much worse as he is in good confort quarters in a house.

Capt King[51] is quite low he has been sick ever since we left Lagrange (I forgot to mention his name before) Billy we have good times down here pleanty to eat and lots of fun. Lynn Gosnell[52] has been unwell some of the time but is much better now he is detailed to wait on Jeff Eyerly & three others.

Do you think you would like to have a darky? I dont think you would go much on the darkeys if you was among them a while.

We have lots of guard duty to do I was on Patroll guard day before yasterday I dident doe anny thing but lay around on Cotton bales. Soldiering is rather lazy work a goodeal of the time.

I havent got my things yet that the folks sent with Rev Peterson he had to leave them at Lagrange on account of transportation. He left them in charge of our Sutler I think we will get them soon, as the cars are running to this place now.

In regard to things to eat we need vegitables verry much we some times buy dried Peaches & stew them, we can get them from 20 to 30 cts pr lb, a verry good article. I have just been to Supper I will tell you what we had, Coffee - Hardtact & tough Beef, how would you like such a Supper?

I tell you when we get hungry we can eat most anny thing. The weather is verry pleasent down here most of the time.

Tell Clara & Alice[53] I would like to see them & east Molasses Candy with them. tell them we dont see but few white girls down here they are most all Black. . . .

My respects of all.

Your Uncle
H H. Orendorff

Waterford Miss. Dec 14th 1862

Dear Father & Mother

I will this pleasent morning improve the time by writing you a few lines, I have written Home so often I am allmost ashamed to write but Mr. Malony[54] called at our tent & told John that he wanted to carry a letter to you. . . .

We havent got anny letters from Home since since Peterson returned, We havent had regular mail since our Brigaid left I suppose our mail has followed the Brig-

Father I suppose you have a pretty good idea about this Southern Country, it is so poor I wouldent give a hundred Dollars for the best Section of land I have seen in Miss, that is for my own use. . . .

Accept love from John & I both We are as ever your true Soldies Boys

H H. Orendorff
Waterford Miss.
Co F 103 Reg Ills Vol

Notes

[1] Private Samuel Rockhold of Banner.

[2] Corporal Aaron Dean Addis of Minonk and Sergeant Thomas Harrison of Galesburg. The 77th Illinois Infantry Regiment was also organized at Peoria and did not leave its instructional camp until early October.

[3] Rev. William Peterson of Canton served as the regiment's only chaplain.

[4] Private John W. Orendorff of Banner, Henry's brother.

[5] First Sergeant David A. Snyder and Private William Gibson of Canton.

[6] Washington Orendorff, Henry's oldest brother.

[7] Captain William Vandevander, commander of Company F, from Canton. Prior to the war, Vandevander had been a school teacher, justice of the peace, and bookkeeper. When the 103rd was being recruited, he resigned his position as police magistrate with the village of Canton. *Portrait and Biographical Album of Fulton County, Illinois* (Chicago, 1890), p. 684.

[8] Sarah Margaret Orendorff, Henry's sister known affectionately as "Maggie." She and Henry were kind of the "second family" of John and Margaret Orendorff, born three years apart. They were the last two offspring and developed a close relationship.

[9] Captain Franklin C. Post hailed from Canton and commanded Company E. The ailing enlisted man was Private John Huston, Company E.

[10] Although no explanation was given to him, Orendorff was probably asked to sign a clothing receipt. In his next letter he mentions being issued an overcoat.

[11] Apparently a Peoria hog buyer. Letter from Washington Orendorff, March 1, 1863.

[12] "Thornburg" must be the recently employed cook Henry refers to earlier in the letter.

[13] Second Lieutenant Charles Suydam, Company E, of Orion.

[14] Piper Woolen Mills owned by John G. Piper supplied blankets for the Union army during the Civil War. Edward R. Lewis, Jr., *Reflections of Canton* (Canton, n.d.), p. 7.

[15] Caroline Elizabeth Orendorff is Henry's sister. She married William Parlin. Mary is a sister-in-law, wife of brother William J. Orendorff.

[16] Mr. Goshnell may have been a relative of Private Wesley Gosnell of Canton.

[17] Presumably Henry is writing about John W. Proctor, banker from Lewistown. Helen H. Clark, *A History of Fulton County in Spoon River Country* (Astoria, 1969), p. 200. Hereafter referred to as Clark, *History of Fulton County*.

[18] Private Samuel Rea of Fulton County. Henry mentions Mr. Pool on several occasions suggesting a familiarity. Perhaps he is referring to Andrew Pool who lived on a farm in Orion Township and a neighbor of Uncle John Lowe. *1850 Census of Fulton County* (Canton, 1978), p. 328.

[19] Henry's first cousin Libbie Orendorff.

[20] Private William Maloon of Banner, Company E.

[21] Lib or Elizabeth Rawalt was a sister of one of Henry's friends. Her father, Jonas Rawalt served as major in the 7th Illinois Cavalry.

[22] Mrs. William (Caroline) Parlin.

[23] Private Frank Lermond of Canton.

[24] Private William Post of McDonough County.

[25] Private James Dilts, Company D of Canton.

[26] Hotels in Peoria. *Peoria Business Directory of 1861* (Peoria, 1861), p. 14.

[27] Henry's second cousin Quintus Orendorff.

[28] Private John Wise of Canton.

[29] Private Michael Augustine of Canton.

[30] Probably Private Benjamin Rockhold of Canton, Company E, 8th Illinois Infantry.

[31] Private John Walker of Lewistown, Company A and Joseph Moss of Cuba.

[32] Captain William Vandevander and Samuel R. Rockhold.

[33] Private Theodore Munger of Monterey, Company C, 17th Illinois Infantry.

[34] Perhaps Corporal John Shriner of Canton, Company K, Seventh Illinois Cavalry. Most of Company K was from Canton.

[35] Private Jessie Hoag of Canton, Company H, 42nd Illinois Infantry Regiment.

[36] Private Joel Miller of Marietta and Charles Buck of Fulton County.

[37] Corporal J. A. Van Meddleworth of Banner and Company E.

[38] Henry's first cousin, Ester Orendorff.

[39] Ben Rockhold.

[40] *Canton Weekly Register*.

[41] Private John Rogers, Company E, of Orion.

[42] Corporal George Moss from Cuba.

[43] Captain Van Lynn must be Henry's nickname for commander William Vandevander. Private Welsey Gosnell of Canton.

[44] First Lieutenant Bernard Kelly of Cuba.

[45] A sutler was a peddler who followed the army selling a variety of goods commonly needed by soldiers. Generally, a particular sutler was commissioned to sell to one regiment.

[46] Either Private Joseph or Marion Walters, both hailed from Fulton County.

[47] Since his comments relate to the law or the neglect of the law, Henry may be referring jestfully to Fulton County Judge William P. Kellogg.

[48] Private George V. Coe of Abingdon, Company K, 7th Illinois Cavalry and Major Horatio Nelson of Canton, 7th Illinois Cavalry.

[49] Christian Bidamon, Canton postmaster. *History of Fulton County, Illinois* (Peoria, 1879), p. 542.

[50] Private William J. Everly of Canton.

[51] Captain James King, Company K of Canton.

[52] Apparently Private Gosnell's middle name was Lynn (Wesley L. Gosnell).

[53] Henry's nieces, Clara and Alice Parlin.

[54] Maybe Joseph Malony, a neighbor from Canton Township. Mr. Malony, a "sadler," may have been pursuing a business interest with the army. *1850 Census of Fulton County* (Canton, 1978), p. 120.

2

What Are The Copperheads Doing In Old Fulton

Jackson Tenn Jan 3 1983

Miss Maggie Orendorff

My Sister as I have a few leasure moments I will improve them by writing to you. I suppose Bro John gave you the particulars about us leaving Waterford & coming up to this place on top the cars the first of this week[1] We came up in the night & got pretty cold as it was verry frosty that night it took us all night to come up.

I should have long before this but you are aware our communications have been cut off since the 19th Dec until yasterday[2] We got mail via Memphis. . . . I was not here since there was 60 men detailed out of our Regt to guard a RR train down to Bolivar New Year & I was among that number & it was 12 O'clock last night when we got back. . . .

Our Captain is rather unwell but I think he will be better soon.

We have had some fighting near here lately I suppose you will see an account of it long before you get this.

There was between 3 & 4 hundred prisoners brought in here to day I havent seen them yet. . . . It is true we are on something less than half rations but manage not to get verry hungry. We got our trunk just the day before the Rebs took Holly-Springs. I tell you the butter was fine on our cone pone We were first on half rations about 20th Dec but as it happened we had possession of a grist mill we ground corn and lived on corn bread and mush several days. Tell Sister Mary we thought them pickled apples the best things we ever ate, the corn was good, the cakes wer good, the cabbage was good the dried apples wer good cigars too I fattened up considerable while our good things lasted You mustent think too much about sending us things. My clothing is all good yet. I have two pr Stockings that I havent worn yet, We are going to draw clothing pretty soon. We have had nice weather most of the time it rained last night and this fore-noon some. S.N.R. & John are out on picket to-day.

Jan 4 7O'Clock P.M.

I was detailed last eavening before I got my letter written to help guard a RR train 3, or, 4 miles below this place that had run its nose in the ground the cause was the burning of a small RR bridge by the Rebs, it rained hard the fore part of the night but as it happened I didnt have to stand until 6 O'Clock this morning it had cleared off & was verry pleasant.

Yours verry truly
Orendorff

Jackson Tenn Jan 7th 1863

Bro. Wm.

. . . I thank you verry much for them postage stamps allthough I was not out, the chaplin brought me some when he came to the Regt.[3] I suppose you have full accounts of the battle 20 miles north east of here the day before New year[4] I tell you our boys gave the Rebs a good threashing & took about 300 prisoners & 8 pieces of Artillery among which was a splendid steel piece that was taken off of a Transport this is the Second time we have captured it, it is the best piece that Bragg had.

Wm what do you think about this retrograde move of Gen Grants? We dont like the idea of coming back north so soon, The Rebs seem to be badly scattered & much demoralized in this vacinity. I had much rather be in Mississippi than here for several reasons 1st we had a good chance to Forage in Miss 2d it is farther south 3d the people are no more loyal here than in Miss. . . .

I believe some of the boys in the 20th Ills Regt got married down at Oxford. I havent seen but verry few handsome young ladies in dixie I presume the best stock have been run south enough of this. My health is verry good I never enjoyed better health in my life, I think soldering will probably make a stout man of me John does pretty well, I think he complaines more than I do I laught at him & tell him he will like it better after he gets used to it. I had to laught at him one morning down a Waterford he had been on duty pretty steep for a while & felt rather cross. The Corp-came & called his relief John raised up on his ellbows & said if you ever get me in another such damd scrap you will know it. How does Father Abrahams proclimation take among the Democrats in Canton?[5] I tell you it makes them squirm down here some of the boys swear they will desert if he Arms the niggers, I think old Abes Head is about right dont you? . . .

Our Capt is rather under the weather he has laid in his tent several days he is out a little this afternoon I think he will be better soon. . . .

My Respects to all
Your Bro

Jackson Jan 12th 1863

Dear Bro Washington

John & I are well and enjoy ourselves finely, the boys are generally well in the 103d, I think the health of the Regt has improved since we came to this place, I suppose you are aware this is a real Cecesh hole, I have been informed the first company of Cecesh was raised here. I mean the first Company raised in Tenn

Bro John has been writing to Father I suppose he has told most of the news, Washington I must boast a little of my good health, I havent been sick but once since I have been in Dixie, S. W. Rockhold is well & getting fat he weights 160 lbs gross with clean face & light whiskers.

The weather is verry fine for mid Winter. I am setting & writing in my shirt-

sleeves, &, am pleanty warm this is a delightful climate if the Soil was good, &, the blamed Negroes & timber cleared off I would like to live down in Tennesee, I think it rains from 1 to 3 days pr week the rest of time is fine.

Washington I wish you would go to McQuaids[6] and get a quire of good commercial note paper & bunch of buff Envealops & send them to me I like this kind of paper verry well, I would send for more but it may be misscarried, I have just been out on Batallion drill I tell you we drill much better than we did in Peoria, you have my best wishes Your Bro H H Orendorff

PS. I will write a few lines to my Bro Parlin.

Mr. Wm Parlin Dear Bro, I was out Foraging yasterday (Sabbath of course) for fatigue & other duties our old Col Swore when we was at Lagrange that hed he d - md- if we shouldent attend Church (it rather got the Chaplin down). Well in regard to our Foraging we went out about 7 or 8 miles west of here, we found pleanty of forage, Such as corn, pork, yams, Turnips, Honney & etc. I saw some of the best Plantations I have seen in the South, I picked out one for us, it contains about 1000 Acres part of it good corn land, the rest of it well adapted to the culture cotton, It allso contains a dilapidated Apple Orchard a fine Peach Orchd & anny amount of Blackberry Briers, doe you think such a plantation would suit you? . . .

Jackson Jan 12 1863

Mr. Wm. J. Orendorff

Bro Wm your first letter of Nov 10th was recd yasterday it seem as though it has been misscarried or a long time on the way We have pretty good times now pleanty of duty to perform, and half Rations. Saturday I applied for a Pass so that I could go to church Sabbath, but late saturday eavening here came a heavy detail to go out Foraging so thats the way going to Church goe in Dixie. . . .

Your Bro.
Orendorff 1st

P.S. I will write a few lines to Maggie on this sheet

Kind Sister Maggie

. . . in your fist letter you asked some thing about our gens[7] When we wer first Brigaided we wer in the 1st Brig 4th Division Brig Gen Pugh commanded our Brig McPherson[8] our Division & etc We are Brigaided again now with 50th Ind 27th Iowa & a Tennesee Regt. I assume we will move tomorrow Some say we will go into Ky & some say we are going move about a mile out of town direct to Jackson. . . .

I dont want to come Home until the thing is fairly adjusted & the last Reb made to repent. . . .

Orendorff 1st

Camp Reed Feb 9th 1863

Mr. Wm H. Parlin

. . .I was glad to hear from Home. I am well & so are the most of our Canton Boys We have pretty good times we are on Picket every other day, when we go out on picket we are out from 26 to 28 hours out of 48, I tell you it is fun to be out on picket when it Rains or Snows we had about 3 inches of Snow the 5th inst on the morning, of the 6th it would have been good Sleighing if we only had Some Sleighs.

Sleighing is about played out with us for a while. . . .

I must tell you a good joke on Mike Augustine, he was out on Camp Guard the other night, we had some company in the eavening, some of the Boys took & charged a pipe with powder when, Mike came in some of the Boys said Mike lets take a smoke Mike picked up the pipe that was charged sat down close to the fire-place lit it & commenced smoking he said it was pleasant to have the privelige of taking a good old smoke, pretty soon it (the powder) ignited and blowed the fire & tobacco up in his face set his hair on fire, he jumped up leaped out of the tent he flew around & tried to find the man that throwed a catridge down the chimney, I never laughfed so much in my life the blamed fool thought some buddy had throwed a catridge down the chimney he went around smoking the tobbaco that was in bottom of the pipe he dident find out the joke for two days. I tell you Mike is a little gr - n.[9]

Yours verry true
Uncle, HH. Orendorff

Camp Reed near Jackson, Tenn
Feb 11th 1863

Dear Bro Wm.

. . . Dan Points[10] has his discharge papers I think he will Start Home within a week, I am glad Dan has got a discharge he is a good fellow in Camp, but is not often fit for duty, we have about 6 or 8 in our company that ought to be discharged Lynn Gosnell & Wils Fisher[11] are among that number, Lynn has not been in the Hospital only as a waiter he complains of the pptisic[12] a good deal. My paper is so poor that I cant write but one page, We have had a good deal of duty to perform of late, we are on Picket guard every other day. I like to go out on picket when the weather is nice; Yasterday we wer on Police guard at Hospital no I. The Hospitals in Jackson are in good condition We kept on a relief until 7 O'clock only we then went in & went to bed, I went and got bunks in the convalescent tent for four of us namely Bro John S.N. Rockhold John Wise and myself I tell you we slept bully while we were waiting to be relieved this morning I came across Abe Garbrant,[13] he is about used up. How are the Rebs up in Illinois or the Copper Heads I had better say?

E Camp Reed near Jackson Tenn
Feb 13th 1863

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Mrs C Parlin
My Dear Sisters

. . . I have been informed that the 11th Ills Cavalry are under marching orders they are ordered to Springfield Ills so report says.

We allso hear camp rumurs that we are going to Springfield Ills. In regard to the Camp Rumurs we dont give them much credit. . . .[14]

It is hard to tell when the Capt will leave us I tell you we hate to give him up,[15] I think likely Kelley will be our Capt, I guess he will doe; you know about what he is I suppose. . . .

Mr Peterson[16] is allright, he is appointed by the Col to attend to the sanitary affairs of the Regt, He is well and doing well. He is a perfect imposition on the Regt you may think this is plain talk but nevertheless it is true.

I expect to get a Commish in some Nigger Regiment the darkies are all anxious to be armed and help gain their freedom I was talking with an old darkey last night I asked him how he would like to help whip the cecesh? he said "fust rate" he said there were several reasens why they would fight good 1st bekos if da get us dey kill us and den be kos we be free, I honestly think they would fight pretty well -

It is most time for taps so I must stop writing. . . .

Orendorff

No date, but undoubtedly February 1863

Wm,

John and I are both well and doing fine. I never enjoyed better health in my life then I have for the last three months. Our letters from home come very irregular. . . .Your letter accompanying Medicine sent to J W is the only letter we have had from you for two or three months.

It is just 20 months to-day since we enlisted, time passes rapidly to us. Wm I have been thinking some of late, of applying for a commission in Colored Service. Let me ask your advice, I know there are many objections urged to that branch of service, but I look on it as honorable. I believe these colord troops should have as good if not Superior Officers, to White Soldiers[17] I can get a recommendation I have no doubt. I think I would like that branch tolerably well, but would not like to get into it contrary to wishes of my friends at home.

Perhaps I should ask Father and W.S.'s advice. You can speak of it when you see them if you wish. . . .

H H Orendorff

No Date[18]

We have just Come in from Dress parade, We had lots of orders to-day Lieut Mattison of Comp G is appointed Capt of Comp K. John Dorrance is appointed Capt of Comp I Frank Lermond is Sargent Major other appointments to numerous to mention,

I dont go much on Col Dicks judgment,[19] I havent much of interest to write,

Frank Lermond is a perfect nuisance he has shirked his duty ever since he has been in Dixie;

We had an order read in Dress parade suspressing the Chicago Times[20] I tell you it makes the Copper Heads howl They swear they wont read the Tribune at all we dont ask them to, I am afraid there will be some desertions in our Regt when we get paid off.

Since I have been writing I understand that Capt Medley[21] of Co I is going to start Home tomorrow I guess I will send this with him. . . .He thinks the South will gain their independence I think not Read & then commit this poor miserable sheet to the flames

H, H, Orendorff

Camp Reed Near Jackson Tenn
Tuesday Feb 17th/63

Wm J. Orendorff, Esq

With great pleasure your kind letter of Jany 23 & 25th inclusive was Recd-accompanied by Wine Jelly, Butter & paper, &, Envelops Saturday Feb 14th.

For which we feel verry thankful

. . . I am getting quite fleshy think I would weigh over 150 lbs. . . .

The Captins health is some better than it was, his (private) Resignation was returned unapproved a few days since Not red tape enough about it I think it will be all right next time you need not look for him Home for 5 or 6 weeks We regret verry much to have him leave us, The health of the Regt is not improving anny We Report about 350 men fit for duty, it don't look like the same Regt that left Peoria Oct, 28th in full bloom but such is the doom of all Regiments or a most all we have in our company 36, men reported for duty.

Our Regt hasn'ent done anny foraging for 3, or 4, weeks, but we are on picket or camp duty every other day, I was on picket last Sabbath. Oh! Such a beautiful clear warm & sun shiney day. I suppose you see the painful affects of the war in the North but the affects of it in the North are nothing to be comparied with the painful & disastrous affects down here, I dont sympathise much with the citizens, not withstanding some of them are loyal, but often the inocent have to suffer

on account of the guilty.

I think if we are successful at Vicksburg we will be at Home or on our way Home the fourth of July. (so much for my opinion). . . .

H H. Orendorff

No Date[22]

I will write a letter on a blank page that I recd last night accompanied by a verry interesting epistle, ... What are the copperheads doing in Illinois we hear great reports about the fighting up their, if they dont cool down we will come up & cool them. we would as soon fight the Rebs up in Illinois as in Tennesee or anny other place. Lynn Gosnell, sent Home a copy of some Resolutions[23] that we adopted in our Regt. yasterday, we first had them submitted to the companies - Separately Our, Company voted them down as several others did, Our Brig - Commander, Col Dunham,[24] mad our Regt a Speech, after the Speech Col Dick - Submitted the above mentioned Resolutions about half of the Regt maby more adopted them the rest wer silent[25]

I am sorry that our Company are no more loyal than they are, I guess they would fight well though. get the Resolutions of Mr. Gosnell & read them I think they are all right at least my sentiments are spoken in them. . . .

Your Uncle
H. H. Orendorff

Camp Reed Near Jackson Tenn
Feb 20th 1863

Mr. John Orendorff
Dear Father

I am well and enjoying myself verry well, John is verry well and, so are most of our comrades from the vacinity of Canton

Hardy Robison arrived here last evening Isaac seems to be a little better today.[26]

The health of our Regt is rather poor, some of our members have the smallpox, but none of our company, our company report 36 men fit for duty, Hardey Robison is spending the evening with us

Mr. Sevey is in our Regt to night.[27] I think I will send this letter with him,

Father I haven't Recd-but one letter from you since I have been in Dixie, I understand from My Sisters letters that you have written to me since you was in Bloomington. I suppose it was miscarried, I wish you would write to me and let me know how you enjoyed your visit at Bloomington, how is Uncle Thomas? is he in pretty good spirits? how is Uncle Wm?[28] is he as as much cecesh as he used to be?. . .

I suppose you have heard of the suppression of the Chicago Times, in this District I tell you it makes some of our Democret Friends squirm;

Our Brigaid commander (Col Dunham) made us a speech a few days ago, I think it done some of our Boys good. . . .

I am verry respectfully your dutiful son.

H H. Orendorff

Jackson, Tenn Feb 25/63

Wm Parlin Esq
Dear Sir

Yours of the 4th inst was Recd-through kindness of Mr Somebody it found us well & in good spirits, The butter was good & helped our Hardtack to slip admirably, thine Wine allso soon "went the way of all the Earth". . . .

We have good times now plenty to eat and duty every day & comfortable quarters.

What doe you think about the Emancipation Proclamation? is it going to divide the North?

Some of our boys get awful letters from the Copper heads[29] I think if the people at home would come out and support us they should denounce the traitors at home we could clean out the rebs-in Arms in a verry short time, but the way they are doing it gives the hell hounds encouragement & that is calculated to prolong the war. they know what is going on in Illinois as well as we do. I am in for Arming the negroes I think they will fight pretty well,

Pitt Kellogg & Col A.C Babcock[30] are in Camp this eavening

From the way you speak of the Plantation & Negroes I suppose a Regt or Brigaid would suit you; if you was to take command of a Brig then you would be Brigatary Gen- as Billy says Excuse nonsense

My respects to all
H H. Orendorff

Camp Reed Jackson Tenn
Feb 25th 1863

Wm J Orendorff Esq
Dear Bro-

. . . Bro John is a little unwell he took a severe cold last week he took some medicine yasterday & is much better to-day I think he will be well in a few days Dr Morrison[31] was down to see him to-day he thinks he will be all right in a day or two.

I am well verry well & still getting fat Lynn Gosnell is on his taps, by the way Lynn is a bully Boy,

. . . We wer out target shooting I tell you we doe some awful shooting. . . . by the way we have some greenies in our Regt & some Copper-heads allso,[32] Why dident you Canton Folks go down to Lewistown & clean that copperhead convention out?[33] It would doe me good to shoot Northern traitors I think them worse than Rebs in Arms dont you?

Our mail is verry unregular We get some by way of Memphis & some by way of Columbus, It is supposed the Rail Road will be finished through to Columbus this week then we will look for our mail more regular.

I am glad you wrote concerning the Money you let Bro Peterson have for he has never mentioned it to us & by the way I let him have five dollars $5.00 when he went to start home, which he said he woul replace when he returned & when he came back he said he hadent any money now but would pay me when he got his pay I tell you I think him a bogus preacher he has only preached to us once since we came to Jackson allmost 2 months;

The expenses on both Trunks was about one & a half or two Dollars $1.50 or $2.00.

Your Bro
H.H. Orendorff

Camp Reed Jackson Tenn
March 4th 63

Wm Orendorff Esq.
Dear Brother

Your kind letters have been duly received, & perused with much interest. I am well verry well Bro-John is still unwell, but I think is some better than he was at my last writing; he was pretty sick last sabbath and sabbath Evening also Monday morning Monday he commenced getting better, Yesterday he was better & had some appetite, he also had more of an appetite this morning his diet is dried Apples stewed & toast bread & blk tea he walked over to the Captins tent this morning. he is considerably reduced but I think he will gain very fast from this on.

John is setting up now broiling a verry thin piece of dried beef I wont let him have much because I think it aint good for him. I cant write this morning it seems impossible,

Bro-Wm Gibson is a little unwell, but I am in hopes he will get better in a few days, Lynn Gosnell still has the phthistic or asthma, but all is well with him (dont let his father know it).

Whitt Bennett is still unwell, I believe these are all the cases of complaining[34] in our company from vacinity of Canton.

I suppose Hardy Robinson will tell the folks how we are situated prospering & etc.

We drew new Hats last Evening Brass mounted with blue cord & tassel

beautiful things I tell you, Uncle Sam is pretty good to us he gives us pleanty of new clothes & I think will be around with a handful of Green Backs one of these days at least we all hope so, by the way I have pleanty since you was so kind as to send me that postal currency. . . .

My love to all, write often

H H. Orendorff

Dont be uneasy about Bro John I will keep you posted in regard to his health the Doctor thinks he will get along without any trouble now

Tell Mother I take good care of him, I keep him in my tent

Camp Reed, Jackson Tenn
March 7th 1863

Dear Sister Maggie

. . . Bro-John is gaining verry fast, I think he will be able for duty in a few days he is cooking beans, so you may guess he is getting better.

Sam, Rockhold is on camp guard to-day Mike Augustin has just come off Police duty he was at Hospital No. 1.

Mr. Wm Gibson has been quite unwell but I think he is getting better, Lynn Gosnell is about the same as he has been he seems much attached to us.

Did Hardy Robison deliver them letters to you,

I think I had better wer Flannel shirts this spring and summer dont you? I wish you would make them, & send them by private conveyance if you have an opportunity I am in no great hurry for them I think my old ones will last me for a month or six weeks yet. I forget whether or not I answered your last letter yet or not, I havent much of importance to write this time but I thought i would let you know how brother is prospering, I thought you would be anxious to know how he is getting along, John has a chunk of meat on his plate a little less than his head. . . .

Mifflin[35] is well Sheaf Herr[36] is better than he was, Witt Bennett is quite unwell yet he is going to get a discharge The Dr gave him a certificate of disability this morning. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Camp Reed Near Jackson Tenn
March 9th 1983

Mr. J. Orendorff
Dear Brother

your brief note of Mr Roadcape[37] was recd from his hand, it found me well and Bros-health much improved.

Well we have marching orders this Evening We are ordered to Lagrange

Tenn. I suppose we will be in Lagrange to-morrow night, Well there is one consolation we are some what acquainted at Lagrange, Some think we will not stop at Lagrange or go on to Corinth, so much fer my opinion, Where ever we go our mail will follow us, &, I will try and keep you posted of our where abouts

I am in hopes they will evacuate this Rail-Road simply for the reason it takes so many soldiers to guard it, &, it seems to be of so little use since we have the Memphis & Charleston Road in operation from Memphis to Corinth. We wer expecting to be paid some verry soon before we got the marching orders but dont know when we will get it now hope soon

I recd a letter from Cousin George Orendorff, the other day I tell you he is down on Northern traiters he says the Rebs-in Arms aint half so mean low graded and dont smell half so bad as they doe, I think he is right dont you! I was out on picket yasterday as usual of a Sabbath, I will give you my experience, We formed in line (the detail) wer counted off on some Roads 6 men on others 8, 10, 12, or, 16, Our squad numbered 12 men One commissioned officer & four non-commissioned We went on the Trenton Road we had two out posts &, a reserve, four men on Each out post & one non-commissioned, & on the reserve four men two non-commissioned & one commissioned namely Montgomery.[38] He is a little green I tell you we had lots of fun, We laid around all day read, &, joked Each other until 10 o'clock P.M. then some of us went to bed We only had to stand one hour and a half Each when I was on my tour I sate read Enjoyed myself finely, so you see we get very careless it is strange to think how careless people will get though our out posts protected our reserve, I always try to do my duty when on Guard etc. . . .

I remain your true Brother
H.H. Orendorff

LaGrange Tenn, Mar, 16th 1863

Mr. Wm Orendorff
Dear Brother

. . . Our Regt- are Provost Guards, & it is said we will stay here as long as we behave our-selves, Our boys are in good spirits. There were 2 or 3 deserted from our Regt just before we left Jackson. . . .[39] We left Jackson the 11th inst about 1 O'clock A.M. & arrived about mid-night I tell you we had a tedious tiersome time down We came on an Extra train and had to lay over at most every station, After we got here we had to lay out the balance of the night SWR M. Augustin & I laid on the platform of the depot. . . .

I was on guard yasterday at the Provost-Marshall's Stable there wer four cittizens came and put their Horses in, they wer from Franklin Co, Miss the next county below Marshall Waterford is in Marshall Co, I guess they are Spies they wanted to buy horses and mules to farm with they say but I think they want to buy them for the Cesesh Army They wanted to buy newspapers and asked

about the fight at Summersville I tell you I dident give them much satisfaction.

Wm we are having some as nise weather as you ever saw, if we wer at Home such weather I tell you we would be plowing in good earnest, by the way I dont think I will put out much of a crop, I will depend on confiscating. . . .

I think if some of the infernal traitors in the North would come down here and see the affects of a Civil War they would dry-up and lay low for Ducks, there are men in the Army that say they have got the Devs marked manny of these men are good loyal Democrats such men I love I tell you we should know no party now but the Union party. What do you think of the Conscript Act? Aint it a good thing?

I am well and hearty and enjoy myself bully; John is gaining fast I guess he will go on duty to-morrow I tell you John makes a good soldier. . . .

I must Close
Write often Your Bro
H H. Orendorff

La Grange, Tenn March 21, 1863

Miss Maggie Orendorff
5 miles South east of Canton
South line of Orion Township
In the kitchen baking pies etc
Dear Sister,

Your kind letter of the 1st was Recd last evening, The good things accompanying it allso, for which we owe you (at home) ten thousand thanks, It is impossible for me to express my gratitude with pen and ink, and I doubt much whether I could orally if I had the opertunity, the reading material is allso thankfully accepted, we sometimes suffer for reading matter, it is a pleasure and a comfert to have something to read when we are in camp, and when on duty.

Our duty here is Provost. we have good comfortable Houses to stay in when we are on duty, at the reserves, I was on duty yasterday twenty hours out of twenty four I had four hours to sleep last night, I slept from 1o'clock until 5 O'clock AM this morning. I aint half so sleepy headed as I used to be at Home, I have staied up all night many times I generally manage to get to sleep from four to six hours and sometimes eight.

My health is good with the exception of a cold and soar-throat which diseases prevail to some considerable extent in the Regt. The boys of your acquaintance are generally well John Rogers is pretty sick he has chronic Dioreah I am fearful of his recovery he is in the Regimental Hospital I hope he may get along but some die with the same disease, The Boys say he is Home sick. Whitt Bennett is gaining slowly he is going to get a discharge I tell you he is as good a boy as ever lived, The steward has been pretty sick but is gaining I think.

I met John Dodge in town, yasterday he belongs to the 6th Iowa Vol, Inf.

he looks fat and hartey he is a musician he plays the fife his Regt is in Camp at Grand Junction 3, or, 4, miles east of here, I think I will get a pass and go down and see him some day. The 7th Ill Cavaly are in Camp near this place Mazinley Rankin[40] has called on us two or three times he spoke of being at our House he is well and in good spirits. . . .

I am not on duty to day as I expected yasterday. Our Cavalry had a brush with the Rebs yasterday close here, and, captured about 40 men We are getting paid a little to day, A month and a fraction owing to the time of enlistment I will get a month and ten days $16, or $18, Dollars I will not send any home this time . . . Chaplin Peterson has his draw he owes us $6 or $8 Dollars, John & I recd $18.20 ct each. enough for spending money. . . .

Please write often
your Bro. H H. Orendorff

Lagrange, Tenn Mar 22nd 1863

Bro Washington

. . . I guess guarding them hogs wasn't very pleasant, if you was a soldier you woulden't mind such things.[41] I like to stand Picket Guard about the best of anything in the line of soldiering I suppose you dident have out Cavalry Pickets when guarding hogs did you? . . .

Washington, I wish you would get as much of that Farm of ours sown to grass as you can this season, I think hay is the best crop a person can raise dont you? . . .

I think soldiering bully, Oh! I al most forgot to thank you for that Bottle of Brandy, It came throug which was allmost a mericle, if you ever send any more Mark it "Dioreah Medicine" and it will sure to come safe, Please write often

Your Bro. H.H. Orendorff

LaGrange Tenn March 27 1983

Dear Bro Wm

. . . Well Brother we have changed boarding places and camp since I last addressed you. . . .

(We had lots of fun to-day, The Capts Negro was owing Mike Augustin 20. cts he came and paid him 25, cts in Tennessee script Mike thought it wasent good and commenced talking about it but the Negro was too fast for him & Mike gave up whiped). . . . The citizens figure pretty largely in this little town, I dont think there is much Loyalty among them. I saw a cittizen the other day in town, he looked like quite a gentleman, he came and spoke to me and enquiered for the Q,M, of the 6th Iowa he said they had been out to his place foraging and wouldent give him any recpt While he was in town knocking around some fellow

road his horse off, So he came up minus a horse & forage, Our Cavalry men play such tricks often, They will sell a horse for $80, $100, or 150, Dollars and then will strike out & capture the Horse before he gets far outside the Picket lines. . . .

H H. Orendorff

LaGrange, Tenn; March 28th 1863

Dear Father and Mother

. . . Father, a Soldiers life is pretty hard, and labor is nothing or at least has been nothing in our Regt The exposure is the worst thing we have to endure Sometimes we have to go out on duty when it is rainey and muddy.

Party Spirit has died down in our Regt to a great extent; the worst fellows we have in our Regt seem to be perfectly cool, our more Copperheads deserted before we left Jackson.[42]

If the Northern People will due the thing that is right we can whip the Rebs most unmercifully this Spring and Summer.

I see by the papers that the Copperheads are fast expiring. I would like very much to see you all, but dont think we will until the War is brought to a close, surely the Rebs are in pretty close quarters I understand flour is worth $80. Dollars pr cwt down in Mississippi and other things in proportion I will give you a list of prices here; Flour $16.00 per bbl; Bacon, 15, to 18 cts per lb Dried fruit 25 cts per lb; peach Pies 20 cts a piece; Apples 5 cts a piece or 7 for a quarter Oranges 10 ct a piece Cider (Hard) $1.00 pr, gal; Whiskey $3.50 ct pr qt; Butter 40 cts pr lb chee do; Boots from $6,00 to $15 pr, Calico 75 cts pr, yd And other things in proportion. . . .

I am sure Uncle Thos[43] will keep all right on the war question, We soldiers will tell our cecesh friends what is constitutional and what is not after we whip the Rebs in Arms

I think the Emancipation Proclamation will prove a success yet. . . .

I think will get a picture taken soon and send some to you. I'm not quite as fleshy as I was in the Winter You know I always get poor in the Summer. . . .

Sabbath morning as I have a little time I will finish my letter. We were called up at 4 o'clock this morning, moved out on the color line and stacked arms,[44] I don't think the Rebs will catch us napping here;

I am on Provost duty to-day.

Whit Bennett has got his Discharge I tell you he is a good Boy but I think he cant live long as he has got the consumption I wish you would go and see him when he gets home if he is so lucky as to make the trip. . . .

H H. Orendorff

LaGrange, Tenn April 6th/63

W S. Orendorff Canton Ill
Der Brother

. . . A couple of unexpected visitors arrived in our camp last Saturday evening. Vis R G, Rogers & Mr. Shuyrock[45] I tell you we were glad to see them.

Mr. Rogers brought me a splendid pair of Shirts for which I am very thankful The only trouble is that they are a most too good for a Soldier, they are admired by all our Company officers Such shirts are worth ten dollars here, I like them much, I al so like the style they are gotten up in, When Boys look at them they say "Bully I tell them are fat."

We have good times now, on duty every other day and pleanty to eat, We have drawn better rations since we have been here than we had since we left Peoria, We have drawn ham, shoulders, corned Beef White Fish (good) Potatoes once & light bread, and hard crackers two days out of five. The light bread is very good it makes the hard crackers go bad. . . .

Washington, I actually like soldiering much better than I used to think I would maybe I wouldent like it so well if I were to get into a Battle.

Mr. Rogers says that you are all well, I tell you it does me good to get to talk to an old neighbor. I am going to let Mr. Rogers have $10.00 ten Dollars he will pay it over to you when he gets ready, when he pays it you will please pay Sarah and Caroline for getting, and, making my Shirts, be sure and pay them besides I am much pleased with them they are admired by all the company. . . .

Your true Brother
H H. Orendorff

Lagrange, Tenn Apr 11th 1863

My Dear Sister, Maggie

. . . This is quite a warm day We went out on drill this morning in our shirt sleeves We drill skermish drill altogether now We deploy as skirmishes over hills, brush and crall up behind trees stumps and gullies etc anything to protect us from the fire of the supposed enemy, I tell you it does us good to go out and run us over hills, brush and gullies. Don't let those people who return from the 103rd flatter you too much in regard to our conduct etc, We try and doe our duty as near as we can, We enjoyed the visit R.G. Rogers made us much, I wish Washington had come with him. Douglass & Thos McCann[46] are well and in good spirits, as all the boys are; in the 103rd Regt. The peace feeling have literly became extinct. I suppose Lynn Gosnell tells some big stories, Lynn is not fit for a soldier at all hope he will get better health now that he has got home.

Sister, do you take the Repository this year?[47] If you dont I wish you would. We dont take anything but the N, Y, Times. . . .

Yours truly H. H. Orendorff

LaGrange Tenn April 15th 1863

Mr Wm J. Orendorff
Dear Brother

Your kind letter of the 5th inst was received Monday the 13th I had begun to think long of time to hear from you, notwithstanding the rest of the family have written to me often. The general health of our Regt is good much better than it has been since we left here last fall, Copperheadism has allso become extinct & the most bitter curses rest upon the heads of the infernal vipers at home that are trying to give aid to the hellish cause of Cecession. We wer mustered Monday, we are told the object of the muster was to find how many conscripts it would take to fill up our Regiment, we need about 30 men in our Company.

Wm I am fearful Grant will not be able to take Vicksburg by water, what do you think about it?

I am well, so are my tent mates Brother Johns health is improving fast, he went on duty again to-day. I hardly think we will get furloughs until after the final of Vicksburg. I would like much to pay you a visit this spring. When you write let me know how Whit Bennett is I tell you he is a splendid boy & grit to the back bone. . . .

Yours Truly H H. Orendorff

LaGrange, Tenn April 20th 1863

Wm J. Orendorff, Esq
Dear Brother

I wrote you only on the 15th but have a good chance to send a letter by our most highly esteemed Captain it is with reluctance we give him up, but at the same time think it best for him to get out of the service, owing too his poor health. I am on picket to-day We went out yasterday morning stood twenty-four hours but no relief came so I came in this afternoon for some sow belly & hardtact, learned that the capt had got his papers and allso that we would not be relieved for twenty-four hours yet, 60 hours is a long time to stay out on Picket but, I am with Lieut Kelly and we are near a house whare there is 3 or 4 fine young ladies they have a good garden so we put in the time B-ly. . . .

Orendorff, 1st

LaGrange Tenn Apr 25th 1863

Miss S M. Orendorff
Dear Sister,

this is Sabbath Eavening, I am on duty to-day am acting Seargt of the Camp

guard & havent much to do. . . . I am glad to hear that my picture got through safe but am sorry you prise it so highly I am sure it is no good picture but take as it is as I told the girl, if she wanted me, but alass my moustache has gone up the spout we got a new shaving machine & it cut them all off.

Now for something about this bogus Confederacy of Jeff's, well we are doing big things in this corner Our Brigaid just got in yasterday from an eight day scout down in Mississippi they captured 16 or 18 Rebs & confiscated four or five hundred Horses and mules, and had pleanty of Hams chickens and fresh meet the left wing of our Regt was out; our right wing wer on picket when the Brigaid was ordered out, so Comp F didnt get to go.[48] I think the war will close this Summer (So much for my opinion). . . .

I had a mess of sallet the other day with Mr. Washington Randolph[49] I tell you he is all right so was the Sallet We didnt cook it but ate it with sugar & vinegar.

Oh no! We or some of our boys are going to get Furloughs at the rate of five pr cent if they take the names alphabetically my turn will come about May or June of 1884 thats encouraging aint it. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Notes

[1] Either because of crowded conditions in box cars or wanting to enjoy the fresh air and view, soldiers frequently rode on top of freight cars. This was a very dangerous practice because they often fell asleep from the motion and fatigue, thus greatly increasing the potential of falling off and being crushed by the train.

[2] Union communications in Mississippi were disrupted due to Major General Earl Van Doren's decisive raid against Grant's base at Holly Springs on December 20 causing Federal advance forces to withdraw and ultimately abort this first attempt to seize Vicksburg. In spite of this unfortunate turn of events, the commander of the 103rd Illinois Infantry, Colonel Willard Dickerman, assured General Grant of his preparedness to fight; we ". . . will be ready & give the best we have." John Y. Simon, (ed) (14 vols., Carbondale, 1979) *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Vol. 7, 87.

[3] As is evident, the chaplain was more than a spiritual leader. He was a messenger, conveyer of packages and a pseudo postmaster.

[4] Orendorff is probably referring to the Battle of Stone's River fought near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. His conclusion that "our boys gave the Rebs a good thrashing" illustrates the narrow perspective of war experienced by the ranks for, if anything, Stone's River was a Confederate victory.

[5] President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation became effective January 1, 1863. Captain Wills reported similar anxiety when he wrote: "When the 1st of January's proclamation was issued a number of our officers became very much excited. Several of them talked strongly of tendering their resignations in consequence thereof, and one of them really did. But we were too strong for the d - d compromising lickspittles, and today you can't hear a wimper against it. The major and the adjutant were strongly opposed to it, but they dare not say so to-day." Charles W. Wills, *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier* (Washington, 1906), pp. 150-51.

[6] James R. McQuaid operated a store in Canton. *History of Fulton County Illinois* (Peoria, 1879), p. 561. Hereafter referred to as *History of Fulton County* (Chapman).

[7] "gens" is an abbreviation for generals.

[8] Isaac C. Pugh was a colonel commanding the First Brigade, 4th Division. McPherson is Brigadier General James Birdseye McPherson.

[9] Civil War soldiers were great pranksters who loved to laugh at someone else's expense.

[10] Private Daniel Points of Canton.

[11] Private Wilson Fisher of Canton.

[12] Consumption.

[13] Sergeant Abram Garabrant from Canton and a member of Company K, 7th Illinois Cavalry.

[14] Supposedly, the 103rd and several other Illinois regiments were going home to Illinois and suppress copperheadism. *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier*, p. 156.

[15] Captain Vandevander resigned April 10, 1863, and as Henry predicted, Lieutenant Kelly was promoted to captaincy and command of the company.

[16] Reference is to Chaplain Peterson.

[17] All of the commissioned officers of Black regiments were by design, white men. James M. McPherson, *Ordeal By Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, 1982), p. 351.

[18] Based upon letters written by Captain Charles Wills, the editor determined that the correspondence was written in mid-February, 1863.

[19] Colonel William Dickerman of Liverpool, Illinois. Clearly, others agreed with Henry's assessment for the ranks made such a "fuss" over these appointments that the colonel revoked his orders naming Charles Matteson and John Dorrence company commanders. *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier*, p. 155.

[20] The *Chicago Times* was an anti-Lincoln, anti-war and pro-Democratic newspaper. In June, 1862, General Ambrose Burnside suspended the newspaper, an order immediately revoked by President Lincoln. J. G. Randall and David Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Lexington, 1969), p. 307, and *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (70 vols., Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. II, Vol. V, 724.

[21] Philip Medley of Bernadotte.

[22] Other correspondence dates this letter about February 18 or 19, 1863.

[23] A series of statements pledging to fight the war until the rebellion is crushed and the Union restored while opposing any armistice and denouncing disloyal persons who are verbally aiding the rebels and attempting to generate dissatisfaction in the ranks. *Canton Weekly Register*, March 23, 1863, p. 2.

[24] Colonel Cyrus Dunham, formerly a member of the Indiana legislature and commander of the 50th Indiana Infantry Regiment.

[25] Captain Wills credited the endorsement of the resolutions in part to Colonel Dunham's convincing speech. Although officers attempted to disguise the actual "vote," it was as Henry reported far from unanimous. "We finally got those resolutions adopted, after a speech from Colonel Dunham, without a dissenting voice, though it was by no means a unanimous vote. Don't think that more than two-thirds voted aye, though don't let any of the democratic friends know anything to the contrary, but that we all voted for it." *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier*, p. 157. See also *Canton Weekly Register*, March 23, 1863, p. 2.

[26] Apparently a concerned relative visiting the camp of the 103rd Illinois and Private Isaac Robinson of Banner and Company E.

[27] A well-known Canton photographer who also worked for the military during the Civil War. Clark, *History of Fulton County*, p. 93. Several members of the Orendorff family had photos taken by William Seavey.

[28] Uncle William Orendorff.

[29] The mind and commitment of soldiers in the field was influenced by letters from home berating war aims and encouraging desertion. Wood Gray, *The Hidden Civil War* (New York, 1964), p. 133.

[30] Colonel William Pitt Kellogg commanding officer of the 7th Illinois Cavalry. Colonel A. C. Babcock organized the regiment but resigned when the unit was mustered into Federal service in October, 1862.

[31] May be referring to Surgeon Richard Morris.

[32] Regiment received a few replacements, "greenies" as Orendorff called them. One used a phony identification of John Smith instead of his legal name. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois* (8 Vols., Springfield, 1886), Vol. 5, 629.

[33] At a February 7 meeting in Lewistown, several anti-war resolutions were adopted; ". . . we are opposed to the State of Illinois furnishing another man or dollar for the prosecution of the war" exemplied the strong tenor of the sentiments expressed. *Fulton County Ledger*, February 17, 1863, p. 2.

[34] Corporal Whitfield Bennett of Canton was discharged March 28, 1863, due to disability. The term complaining was used to communicate suffering from an ailment or illness rather than dissatisfaction.

[35] Henry Mifflin of Canton, a hospital steward.

[36] Private Sheaff Herr from Canton and a member of Company C.

[37] Perhaps the father of the Allen and William Rodecape in Company G.

[38] First Lieutenant Nathaniel Montgomery, Company I of Ipava.

[39] In March, 1863, the Federal government enacted its first national conscription act requiring the military service of all able-bodied males ages twenty to forty-five.

[40] Private Ebenezer M. Rankin of Canton, Company K, 7th Illinois Cavalry.

[41] In his March 1, 1863, letter to Henry, brother Washington related his soldiering experience as he called it. Washington had sold 445 hogs to a Peoria dealer and he was asked to guard the pen at the railroad depot in Canton, but nearly half got loose.

[42] The regiment moved from Jackson to LaGrange, Tennessee, on March 10, 1863. On that day, eight enlisted members of Company A deserted. Morale depressed by Union defeats and anti-war activities was at a low point throughout the military during this period and "desertion was increasing at an alarming rate." *Adjutant General's Report of Illinois*, Vol. V, 617-619 and Wood Gray, *The Hidden Civil War* (New York, 1964), p. 132. During its military service, the regiment experienced a total of forty-nine desertions, almost half of them occurred during the first three months of 1863. *Adjutant General's Report*, pp. 617-34. According to Captain Wills, twenty-three deserted prior to the regiment's departure from Jackson; most were from Company A. *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier*, p. 163.

[43] Uncle Thomas Orendorff from Bloomington.

[44] The color line was used to designate where arms were stacked and colors posted in organizing a camp. *Revised Regulations For the Army of the United States, 1861*, pp. 76-77.

[45] Presumably family of soldiers, there was a Rogers and a Shryock in the 103rd.

[46] Sergeant Douglas McCann of Banner and Private Thomas McCann of Canton.

[47] *The Ladies Repository*, a magazine issued monthly dealing principally with literature, art, and religion.

[48] Orendorff is sounding a little cocky regarding the exploits of the Union Army considering its lack of recent and significant military victories. However, his swagger was stimulated by Colonel Benjamin Grierson's successful 600-mile raid deep into Mississippi. Grierson's famous raid was intended to cause a diversion while General U. S. Grant crossed the Mississippi south of Vicksburg. D. Alexander Brown, *Grierson's Raid* (Urbana, 1954), pp. 8-9. The raid commenced on April 17 with six companies of the 103rd Illinois joining the command of General Sooy Smith to serve as an initial escort for Grierson. This activity provided a protected screen as Grierson launched his raid south. Smith's forces made a nine-day march to Holly Springs, Waterford, Colliersville, and back to base camp at LaGrange. As Henry reports, he missed the excitement. *Reminiscences of the Civil War: From Diaries of Members of the 103rd Illinois Volunteer Infantry* (Chicago, 1904), pp. 11-12.

[49] Must be referring to Washington Randolph, a musician in Company C.

3
I Am Not Able For Duty

LaGrange Tenn May 3rd 1863

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

This is Sabbath eavening. I have been to church twice to-day Bro Peterson preached both times he is a splendid preacher this morning he preached in our Regimental Church it is constructed of a small wall tent with a couple of flies in front this afternoon he preached in the Presbyterian Church in town. . . .

I got a letter from Jo Lewis the other day She is patriotic I must answer her letter soon. Mr. Bigson got a letter from Capt Vandevender to-day we was glad to hear from him but sorry to hear he was so unwell hope he will get better soon for we love him he will most surely retain a very high place in our memory, he was always kind and good but not partial to his best friends Companies A & F are out we think on this Memphis & Charleston R.R. between Grand Junct & Corrinth they left last Wednesday with ten days rations[1] I think we will hear from them tomorrow Bro John & I were unwell and dident have to go I have been unwell for the last week, but am getting all right now. . . .

Your tru Bro
H H. Orendorff

LaGrange Tenn May 14th 1863

Mr W S. Orendorff Esq
Dear Brother

I have neglected to write and send by the other boys that have gone home. I have learned since night that Lew Ketchum[2] is going to start home in the morning and will send this by him. I am not gaining fast as I would like to, but think I will be better in a few days.[3] Bro is gaining slowly, he talks some of taking a transfer to Quincy Illinois (Hospital) He can get one if he wants it. If I dont get stout against next Furlough day I will try and get one which will be in 20, or, 25 days. I spoke to Lieut Kelly about it this eavening he gave me a favorable answer. he is kind to me So are the Surgeons. There are 10 boys excused from duty in our company. I suppose the regiment (or companies) will average about the same. We were paid $52.00 fifty two Dollars to-day I will not send any home until I see whether I get well or not. It is late & I must close Please write soon

Yours Truly
H H. Orendorff

LaGrange Tenn May 17th 1863

My Dear Sister Maggie

Your very kind letter of the 7th Inst was received 15th and perused with great pleasure How thankful I am to have so kind a Sister to write to me, while I am in the land of Dixie ready to fight for the protection of the "Noble Old Stars & Stripes" and the ultimate extinction of the internal Traitors I dont know but that I had better call them Infernal traiters. We heard of Whitfield Bennett's "Death" long before I got your letter. He was a Noble Boy a good Soldier & a good companion. I think some of our Boys are very foolish for not writing until they get answers from their friends I tell them so too.

Oh! How I should have liked to have been Home when Joseph Millsass[4] was at our house, I would have given him a strong invitation to come down and preach for us as Chaplin Peterson is about to play out of the regiment. . . .

Our visitors have just gone Home they wer W. Randolph, & Nute Ellis[5] Uncle Isaac Sone they are both fine boys and come up to see us often they belong to Comp C. Washington seems just like a Brother, Wm Gibson has just called to see us, he often speaks of you and the rest of the Family. Sister, maybe you would like to know we pass the time, we (Bro & I) go to bed just when we please, get up when we feel like it and lay around through the day to-day we went out in the woods and had a good time heard a Negro preach to Darkies, I have got so that I feel right at home whenever we go in Camp, I suppose I would feel very lonesome if I was at Home. . . .

Your Brother
H H. Orendorff

LaGrange Tenn May 21st 1863

Wm J. Orendorff
Dear Brother

. . . I havent much of interest to write probably something regarding Brother Johns & my health would interest you as much as any other subject. As for Brother he has not been so well for a few days, My health is about the same as at the last writing. Mr. J W Ingersoll,[6] is here and tried to get Brother off with him but failed the plan that I tried was to have him transferred to the Hospital at Cairo and then let him report there and get a Furlough or a leave of absence to go home, I believe that is the way Rogers[7] got John home with him. John has been unfit for duty for a long time, he gets better sometimes for while and then gets worse, I think if he could get north for a while he would soon get well, He had some fever yasterday and day before, but a very little today. Johns disease I suppose may properly be termed Chronic Diarrhea. Wm I think if you or Parlin would come down you could get John Home with you. he is somewhat disponding for the last few days, I try to cheer him up all I can. I dont want to excite or create

any uneasiness at home but thought I would try and make as true statement of the case as possible. . . . A trip down here would probably pay you if you are not too buisy if you do conclude to come dont be hurried off for he is in no immediate danger. . . .

H H. Orendorff

LaGrange Tenn May 21st 1863

Miss Maggie Orendorff
My Dear Sister

. . . You asked if "Bro was in the hospital?" No he is not nor hasent been, we dont think of going to the Hospital as long as the Regiment remained here if the regiment was ordered away I suppose we would have to go to the General Hospital. This thing of getting Sick Furlough is about played out though. You ask what I mean by him "getting a transfer to a Northern Hospital". Persons that have been unfit for duty 3 months or more can get a transfer to a Northern Hospital & then get a Furlough to go Home, Some have been transferred and had to lay at Memphis a month or two, Others Friends have came after them got them transferred and taken them right Home.

I suppose my explinations on the preceding page will be satisfactory. Sister dident I tell you not to make Kellys Shirts[8] I wanted you to hier them maid by the way when you send them put in a big price for it make a good big bill for you know he gets over a hundred dollars pr month & we $13.00. I am not hard or homesick but would like to be able for Duty think I will though before long. . . .

Good by
H H Orendorff

N.B. Tell Mother not to worry about us boys we are doing well for Soldiers.

LaGrange Tenn May 22nd 1863

Dear Father & Mother,

. . . As for me I have not been on duty since the 26th of April but I am getting much better, but will not go on duty until I get stout, one great trouble with our boys is that they go on duty too soon after they have been sick, such has been the case with Brother John when he began to feel better he would report for duty, go out on picket sleep on the ground catch cold and then would be quite sick again. I feel first trait to-day, the main trouble with me is I am pretty week but am gaining strength slowly, I have found from experience that a person will gain strength very slowly down here, My diet is principally toast bread and Apple sauce, & some times a cup of tea. I havent drank a cup of coffee for over a month. . . . I am not getting as tiard of the Army as some of our boys are, Some would give any-

thing to be out of it, I dont want out until the last Reb is compelled to surrender for I think we are engaged in a glorious cause. I would like to go home on a Furlough and make you all a visit but dont think I would be content to stay until the war is ended.

From the way the thing is working I think the war will close befer another Spring Gen Grant is doing good work down in vacinity of Vicksburg I suppose he is also in possession of Jackson Miss and has got their supplies nearly cut off. The "general health" of our regiment is good with the exception of diarrhea. . . .

Allthough I never tried camping out in Illinois to any great extent, those barracks at Peoria would seem much like Houses to us now. I have got so that I feel right at Home wherever I go in camp and get fixed up a little. I will tell you how we are fixed here, we got a big log about 12 in sqr split it once laid the pieces on edge (we had 4 of course) then cut out part of one of the end pieces and built a fireplace and chimney on the out sid of our house of course (by the way Southern style) set out tent on top the logs made a bunk on each side wide enough for two to sleep on that leaves a narrow alley betwen the bunks in front of the fireplace. Above the fireplace we have two shelves or a double mantle on which we set out tin plates, knives & forks & tin ware generally portfolios ink and every thing of the kind. I call this a pretty comfertable arrangement dont you? For soldiers especially. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Saturday morning. Part of our regiment are starting out on a scout Companies D,B,G,E. our company is still up on the Railroad. . . .

May 27th 1863
Camp in the Woods about half way between
LaGrange and Grand Junc Tenn

Dear Father, Mother, Bros & Sisters & Families,

. . . Our Company are still up on the Rail road, they had a little fight with a little band of gurrillas (I dont know whether that is rite or not) last week, Our Boys (Comps A & F) killed 3 wounded 6 and took 5 prisoners one of the wounded died after they came down here with them, None of our boys was hurt, they caught Mr Reb a knapping they had Boots, Hats etc off.[9] I tell you they looked pretty rough. I think of remaining with the regiment until I hear from the letters I sent by Mr. J W Ingersoll as I am not fit for duty in the Company. I am very tiard and I must quit writing to night I will try and write more in the morning

Thursday morning May 28th 1863

John staid in our regimental Hospital night before last and yasterday until I got our tent fixed up, he says he wouldent stay in it for any thing, Our General Hospitals in LaGrange are much better than our regimental.

Bro Peterson was dismissed from the service but is trying to be re-instated he

is a perfect sham not fit for anything in the Army allthough he is a splendid preacher, he has been away from the regiment for some time, he has charge of the refugees. (The above personal remark should not go farther than the family circle.)[10]

I think the prospect is good for us to spend the Summer along this Memphis and Charleston Rail Road, it is as far south as I want to go until next fall. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Camp "103" Ill Vol near La Grange Tenn
June 1st 1863

W S. Orendorff
Dear Brother

. . . In regard to our health, John is not much different than he was my last writing if any difference he is still growing weaker. We have got a Furlough underway for him, he can get off the last of this week I think. I wish some of you was here to help him to get Home, he had ought to have gone Home some time since; My health is improving very much I will go to the Company as soon as John gets off. . . .

We are nicely situated now have our tent in a good place and enjoy ourselves finly considering the condition of our health etc. . . . I have a Canteen full of Ale to swig at I suppose I should not have told you of the last named article but it is the first I have had and consequently must brag a little on it. I dont use much of such things, I have been very temperate since I came into the Army. I think a person can be as temperate moral & Religious in the Army as at Home, all it wants is a little courage.

Your very True Brother
H H. Orendorff

Camp on the Yazoo "6" miles to the
rear of Vicksburg June 13th 1863

Dear Brother W S. Orendorff

You will probably see Bro Wm before this comes to hand, & he will of course tell you of my being left behind at Memphis I got Transportation and came down on the Luminary a very fine Boat. Our Regt came down on the "Henry Von Phaul" Tuesday June 9th 12 o'clock[11]

We start for "Youngs Point" (which is situated at the mouth of Yazoo River) arrive at "Helena," Ark" just at dark stop an hour or so, 9 o'cl "PM" get a cot we run part of the night and lay over until morning.

Wedns. June 10th to day we are getting along finely we see nothing of importance to attract the attention of a Soldier we are running with a "Gun Boat"

under our "Star Board" she occasionally sends a shell through the Woods & thick brush.

Thurs June 11th Arrive at "Youngs Point at 8½ o'clock "A.M." Report and are ordered up the "Yazoo River" We run up Yazoo 15 miles and land here I go aboard the "Henry Von Phaul" the Boys are generally well and glad to see me have many questions to ask how I got left how I got down etc We move up on the "Bluff" Thursday eavening & took lodging for the night We got under a tree with vines and slept very comfortably Michael and Sam R. bunking with me of course

Friday June 12th We put up our Tents to-day We have our tent in a very comfortable place My tent mates-ar Ordly Snyder Wm Gibson S N. Rockhold & Michael Augustin Our Boys have to work on the Brest Works. We can hear firing at Vicksburg night before last we heard fiering all most all night My health is materially improved since I left Memphis I have not been on duty yet and wont until I get well. I believe this place is called "Snyders Bluff" it is a very pleasant place We are about a half mile above the River, The water is rather poor I use but little of it and it strong with Ess Peppermint which is good preventative for Diarrhea. I had a splendid nice time coming down from Memphis I got acquainted with the Chaplain of the 70th Ohio Infty he is a very fine sociable man.

The 53rd and 70th Ohio Regts came down on the "Luminary" the Company Officers of those regiments are rather a hard set although I got acquainted with some of them that wer quite contrary "among the evil there are some good" Among the sick in the Regt may be found S.S. Sebree[12] Dr. Buck Dr. Morris is allso unwell[13] Pat Grisby and many others are complaining none of the above are dangerously sick.

I got to spend one day and night with Bro Wm which was the greatest pleasure I have had for a long time not withstanding I took much pleasure in taking care of Bro John[14] I spent many happy hours with him and he seemed very thankful for my attentions to him I tell you he is a noble Bro I truly hope he will get off Home. . . .

Everything is tolerable quiet here we cannot tell what moment we will be called on to go out face the "Enemy" I dont feel in any more danger than I did while at "La Grange" although we are much nearer a heavey force of Rebbels Jo Johnston is reported 15 or 20 miles in our rear with about 30 thousand troops it is supposed he will be reinforced by Bragg. I think 25 thousand men could hold those Bluffs against a hundred thousand those bluffs are all cut up with deep hollows & washed gullies. . . .[15]

I remain your true Brother

H H. Orendorff

Snyders Bluff Miss.
June 18th 1863

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

. . . I will merely state we are in camp about "10" miles" north of Vicksburg on the Bluffs of the Yazoo River, Haines Bluff is two more miles farther up the River Our Regt are working on Rifle pitts and brest-works every other day. I havent been out with them but one day then I dident work any, We are getting this place very strongly fortified. I think we could hold it against all most any force that "Johnston" could bring against us. We have been looking some for him to try us on but now we think he will not if he has any correct idea of our force. it is supposed that we will soon have Vicksburg & "Port Hudson". Henry Augustine[16] came over to our Regt yasterday he is looking very well he brought me a letter from Benj Rockhold, he is well and in fine spirits they are in close proximity to Vicksburg. . . .

Yours truly
H H. Orendorff

Snyders Bluff Miss
June 21 st 1863

Dear Friends

This is a fine Sabbath day somewhat cloudy and fine air stiring which tends to make it very pleasant When it is clear the sun comes down very hot some of the boys think it is as hot as August in Ills. We are within 10 miles of Vicksburg (as I have in my former letters remarked) and can hear the thundering roar of Artillery allmost any time yasterday morning we heard incessant fiering until about 9 o'clock "AM" it ceased & was partially renewed yasterday eavening. Col Wright and Major Wilson[17] went over to Vicksburg yasterday and returned this morning they say that Grant is digging under & undermining the Rebs Brest works; from what I can learn we are going to dig down their works, then we can pour in a raking fire. Vicksburg must and will fall and soon at that, probably before this reaches you I am thinking they have rather hot living in there, I suppose there have been several women and children killed allready but who is to blame for it? Not Gen Grant for he gave them ample time to get out. I suppose Pemberton[18] alone is responsible for the killing of those women and children he was foolish enough to think he could hold out until he was reinforced by "Johnston Bragg" and others he thought Grant wouldent attempt to storm his works. Grant has a very strong force in the rear of Vicksburg much stronger than is generally supposed I will quit this subject as you can learn much more from the Papers than I can tell you. Our Army are busily fortifying those Hills Our Regt have to work every other day, these hills of themselves are allmost a natural fortification add to that Rifle pitts around allmost every point and on top those points from one to two Batteries of Artillery We have a very formidable fortification. The Rebs had only prepared to repel a force in front so when Gen Grant got in

their rear they thought it best to skedaddle. I hear from Charles & Benj Rockhold[19] allmost every day. Allso Wm Lowe[20] and others of our acquaintance in the Old Regiments. . . .

Persons at Home (that is many of them) think Gen Grant "has moved slow that he had ought to have taken Vicksburg many days hence" but if they were only down here and could see the shape of things they would say that he had done nobely, just think he first landed at Millikens bend next he got on down to Youngs Point from there he had to pass below Vicksburg and come around to big blk River and then on out to Jackson Miss then back here and run a great risk of having his supplies cut off at any time. I will say that Gen Smith[21] is still in command of our Division his given name is Wm Soul, familliarly Soul Smith the boys generally respect him very much. Col. Hicks[22] of the 46th Ohio Commands our Brigaide. . . .

Yours
H H. Orendorff

Sunday June 21st 1863
Special Correspondence

My Dear Sisters.

I cannot be with you this Sabbath afternoon as I have often been so I will content myself to talk to you on Paper. Well in the first place Right Dress front attention Lieut B. Kelley's shirts was beautifully lost, so were the other things sent by Corpl Jackson[23] I cannot express my contempt for a man that would undertake to carry any thing to soldiers and lose them in the way he did let me ask what did you send besides the shirts and butter? I hope not much elce. . . .

I like this climate down here very well I take notice I am fast getting Black guess I will be a man of Color by the time I get out of service, but I guess my Gall wont care if I am a little blk so she gets me. . . . Tell Capt. Vandevendr I wish he was well and down here with us to hear Gen Grants Patent Thunder as the Boys call it. Some call it home made Thunder. I tell you Capt Vand is one of the finest men I ever saw. I truly love him give him my best wishes etc. etc. . . .[24]

H H. Orendorff

Snyders Bluff Miss June 22nd 1863

Dear Brother John

Your letter of 10th was received last night after we had gone to bed. I was somewhat surprised to hear that you was still at Memphis, but glad to hear that you are getting better. Well, here we are within 10 miles of Vicksburg, in camp on Snyders Bluff on the Yazoo River, Haines Bluff is two miles farther up the

Yazoo We are allmost directly north of Vicksburg. Our Boys have had to work on the fortifications allmost every other day some of them call it a bitter pill, I have not worked on any yet, My health has improved rapidly since we landed here our location is up on a hill whare we get pleanty of fresh air; the greatest trouble is the water is rather poor.[25] We wer paid two months pay Saturday, if I get a chance I will send some of it Home. John, furloughs have about played out, I suppose there will be no furloughs given until Vicksburg is taken. Majors Bewley and Hoar[26] arrived last night they are not fit to be here, I would advise you to stay at Memphis until you get right stout, a man has no business here if he has poor health. John if I was in your place I would not leave Memphis that is to come south until the first of September. I am of the impression that we will strike out after Johnston after Vicksburg is taken I think he will strike to reinforce Bragg.

John, how did Bro Wm feel when he had to go and leave you? Why couldent you get off? When you write give me all the particulars and let me know all about the state of your health. . . . John, if I was in your place I would try and get a good place in the Hospital and stay there through the hot season. I wrote home yasterday and gave the folks all the particulars from way back. We can hear the big guns at Vicksburg very plain I tell you they sound cheering.

H H. Orendorff
lots of the Boys have the diarrhea

Snyders Bluff June 26th 1863

Dear Brother Wm

. . . I got a note from John last week stating that you had started home I am indeed sorry you couldent take him with you. . . . Our Division with several others are out towards the Big Black River ready to meet Johnston and his forces at any time, they started out at 2 o'clock the morning of the 22nd. inst. If you see any of Augustins folks tell them Michael is out there & has no writing material with him and please tell Rockholds the same in regard to Sam. . . .

Yours as ever
H H. Orendorff

Snyders Bluff Miss
July 1st 1863

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

. . . I suppose you will have a good time celebrating the fourth of July in Canton every Patriot ought to turn out and make as great display as possible and let traitors see the Spirit of '76 fully arroused. I am truly sorry that there are men

among us that will continually cry "PEACE PEACE" when there is no peace but let them go they will most surely meet their reward. . . .

It is hard for a person to imagine how much a man sacrifices in the way pleasure and enjoyment by going into the "Army" but I think I shall never regret being in the "Army" if I get out alive & well. I am sorry you all take so much trouble about John & I. I would feel much better if you wer all more reconciled and wouldent worry about us, I expect to get home all right.

H H. Orendorff

Snyders Bluff Miss
July 4 1863

Mr Wm J. Orendorff
Dear Brother

. . . Wm I was much pleased with your visit and enjoyed myself finely whilst with you, but since you couldent get John home with you I am sorry I put you to the trouble of coming down, I should not have written for you to come but I thought Johns health in a very critical condition at the time I wrote. My health is about as good as it was when I left Memphis. . . .

At the preasent time every thing is quiet, early this morning there were 34 guns fired at Youngs Points Millikens Bend and other points since that we have heard no fiering at all. It is reported that Pemberton is about ready to surrender I hope it is so. "When did I catch the Henry Von Phaul" We passed her the second night somewhare, the first I saw of her was at Youngs Point from where she followed us up the Yazoo River and landed just above us at Haines Bluff. . . . And as for looking out for No. "1," a Soldier soon learns that, A Soldier soon becomes aware if he dont look out for himself no body will look out for him, so then he goes in on his nerve as the Boys say.

I would like to give you a description of this country if I could, it is the roughest and most hilly place I ever saw, the hollows are very deep and many of them the banks are so steep a man cant begin to cross them and then the hollows are generally full of cane twenty or thirty feet tall such as they have about the Rivers for fishing Poles it is said by Military men that a force of a hundred thousand men could hold those hills and repulse an enemy three hundred thousand strong that is since we got our rifle pitts dug and other fortifying done. We have a force of fifty or Sixty Thousand out about 5 or 6 miles east of hear they went out there to meet Johnston it was reported that Johnston's forces were crossing the Big Blk River night before last and he intended to attack our forces yasterday morning but he dident do it. The weather is getting pretty warm. . . .

We have reliable information that Vicksburg Surrendered early this morning

It is reported that Grant has ordered all of our forces in the vacinity of Vicksburg to strike out after Johnston merely retaining force enough to guard the city and Prisoners the number of Prisoners taken is supposed to be Twenty five

Thousand. I tell you we feel pretty well over the fall of Vicksburg hope it will stagger the Rebellion to some extent. I hope our forces will draw Johnston into an engagement and will completely annihilate him. . . .

Sabbath morning July 5th 63

Every thing seems quiet here since Vicksburg has come under We no longer hear the thundering of our Morters and Seige guns. Some of our Boys have just come in from the Regt and say that the Regt is to start at 4 O clock this morning I suppose there is quite a force to start after Johnston I truly hope that they will catch him. This is the hardest place we have been in yet to get any news, we dont get any papers but those we get by mail the papers by mail allways come through all right. I would like to be whare I could attend church this morning but that privilege is denied me. I havent heard a sermon for two months or more. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Snyders Bluff Miss July 7, 1863
Mr. John W. Orendorff

Dear Brother

I have been looking for a letter from you for some time, I hope you will write oftener in the future. Well our Boys are out on the Big Black River they wer skirmishing some yasterday and day before[27] Myriam Stephens[28] was wounded (Yasterday) in the leg it is nothing but a flesh wound there wer three others wounded in the regiment, from Comp "D" one from Comp "E" and one from Comp "C" they are all strangers to me and I suppose you wouldent know them if I was to give their names[29] I understand our Brigaid was crossing the Big black River yasterday some think Johnston is out there with a large force I doubt whether he has much force in the vacinity of the "big black"

The Boys that are wounded are wounded in the legs generally one of our regiment is wounded in the shoulder.

John are you still in the Hospital dressing wounds? Are you getting pretty stout? Lieut. Kelly said you had better stay at Memphis until you get right stout, this is a hard place for a sick man I tell you.

There was a man died in Comp "I" night before last I forget his name.[30] there are a lot of the boys sick in the regiment.[31] Dan Walters is pretty sick so is Bill Lawrence and Bill Loveland & Ed Deary[32] there are many others complaining but those are the werst.

My health is getting pretty good again I am as stout now as I was when I left Memphis I am not able to do any heavy marching yet. . . .

I must close, your True Bro

H H. Orendorff

Snyders Bluff Miss
July 10th 1863

Mr. W S. Orendorff
Dear Brother

. . . Well our Regt is out somewhare towards Jackson Miss I cant tell you just whare they are, as we have not heard from them for two or three days.[33]

Ben Rockhold came up from Vicksburg last evening and stayed all night with me he is looking fine, I suppose you have an official report of the surrender of Vicksburg long before you get this, the amount of Prisoners parolled up to yasterday was Thirty two Thousand, I suppose we got between three and four Millions Dollars worth of property. It is believed that Port Hudson Surrendered on the 3rd of this month, Our forces have sent in (3,000) Three Thousand Prisoners captured from Johnstons Army I tell you we will soon have the South West cleaned out to perfection. I have not been down to Vicksburg yet but think I will try and go day after to-morrow if nothing happens I dont want to be near the citty and not get to see it.

Our boys are in good Spirits generally and think Grant is the "Bully of the War". I am of the opinion that we are doing a good thing in the way of parolling the Prisoners taken at Vicksburg, it will scatter them so that they will never get them togather again, The Missourians say that they will stay at home after this, they have got enough of fighting the Yankees. the Texas and Louisiana troops will almost all stay out of the Army. I think it is much better to parol them than to transport them North and then guard them and feed them allso. In regard to our Regiment there are a good many of them convalescent and some of them quite sick. Ordly Ben Wood of Comp "E" Died night before last at 1 o'clock. his disease was Diarrhea I believe.[34] We had a man wounded in our Company a few days ago in a skirmish on the Big black River his wound was a flesh wound in the Calf of his leg, his name is Stephens & lived in Cuba he is getting along very well.

. . . I am of the opinion that our Division will be ordered back to Tennessee in a short time to help take Chattinooga Tenn. Chatinooga is going to be a hard place to take but as Ben Rockhold says we can take any place we try. Dan Negly[35] was up here and staied with us last night he is in fine spirits and says if the "War" aint over when his time is up he will re-enlist. . . .

H. H. Orendorff

Snyders Bluff Miss
July 12th 1863

Dear Father & Mother,

I am seated this pleasant Sabbath evening for the purpos of writing you a few lines in answer to yours sent by John Rogers, he arrives here last eavening and seems pretty well, he said he saw John in Memphis he says John is doing fine

and is getting well. I am afraid Bro John will want to come to the Regt too soon I think it wont be expedient for him to come until September if we stay here. . . .

Sunday seems to come and go as other days we have no Chaplain and none in our vacinity, I havent heard a sermon for a long time, A soldiers life is a very unnatural life for a person that has been raised in good society and been in the habit of attending Church. Sabbath School etc, but we must and can endure any thing to wipe out this foul Rebellion. . . .

I saw John Rogers last evening and had a talk with him, he dont give a fellow much general information, I think he had ought to have staid Home until the 1st of September he could have been reported "At Home sick" by his Company Officers. If I dont get right stout I will try and come Home the 1st of next month. The health of our Regt is rather poor, We have sick and convalescents in camp about 20 to the Comp or 200 to the Regt out of this no about 60 would go to the Regt if they had the opportunity. I think the health of the Boys (in Camp) is rather improving.

I remain your True Boy
H H. Orendorff

Snyders Bluff Miss
July 25th 1863

J W. Orendorff
Dear Brother

. . . My health is about the same as at may last writing, John Grove[36] got here to-day and is not fit for duty it is a great pitty that he came to the Regiment for this is a very hard place for a sick man to get well, I had better say this is a bully place for a man to get sick. I doe hope you wont come to the regiment until you get right well. There is no chance for a man to go North from here without he is about gone-up. Now John I would advise you to stay at Memphis. I am sure if you was to come down here it would be a bad move for you. Our regiment are still out somewhere towards Jackson, Miss.[37] I think we will go out there if they dont come in in a day or two. . . I have still been in hopes we would be ordered to Memphis. Our Boys (in camp) have got the chills and feaver pretty bad, I think this is a very unhealthy location here, the most so of any place we have been in Camp for a long time. . . .

H H. Orendorff

PS. . . .I havent been on duty but once since we came down here and then I only acted Sergt of the guard. it will be three months to-morrow since I have been on duty with this one exception. I hope this may find you rapidly regaining your health.

Yours as ever
H H. Orendorff

Camp of 103rd Ills
July 28th 1863

Dear Sister Maggie

I dont know what to call our camp, It is within one mile of the Big Blk River in the woods. I left Snyders Bluff yesterday morning and got to the Camp of 55th regt Ill vol whare I staid all night. I came on to the camp of the 103rd Ills this morning. Lieut Augustine came up to camp with me I will send this letter by him as he is going Home on Furlough. I havent much to write this time. Of course I would like to come home on Furlough. Was you in earnest about a Substitute? I will accept of one of course if we can make it work all right.[38]

I will answer your letter in full in a very short time, My health is pretty good at preasent I marched 12 miles yasterday and feel very well to-day. . . .

Who was it offered to come as a substitute for me?. . .

Yours Very Truly
H H. Orendorff

Camp Sherman Near the Big Black River
Miss Aug 1 1863

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

"2" O'clock "P M"

. . . Michael Augustine Dr Mayo[39] I and four of "Comp" D's boys went out and killed a fine Beef last evening we brought in the two hams our comp got one Michael and I saved a nice lot to jirk. I tell you it is fine.

I am getting stout and can forage as much as any of the Boys I tell you it does me good to eat Secesh Beef and Hogs.

This is Saturday afternoon I wish I was Home so that I could go up to Canton and get a lot of papers, then in the morning we would go to church the last time I heard a Concio it was delivered by a Colard Preacher I tell you he done very well Bro John was with me I doe miss my Bros Society very much since we left Memphis I tell you John is one of the best fellows in the World he has shown his real character since he has been in the "Army" this is the best place I ever saw for a man to show his character and Disposition. . . .

Sunday Aug 2nd 2 O'clock "P M"

I am alone in my tent My bunk mates viz SNR & Michael Augustine are out on picket.

Sister, I think that must have been a very kind and obliging Gentleman that asked you if I would like to have a substitute, Please let me know who he is, I

am of the opinion that a substitute would not be accepted in the Volunteer Service, but will make some inquiry among the officers and let you know,

I like the service and enjoyed myself finely before I got sick, I feel well now but am enclined to be weak, It seems as though I don't gain strength at all. . . .

I think that I will send this by Saml Rockhold as he gets a Furlough this time. I can enjoy my-self very well in our preasant camp the Officers are all very kind to me and dont requier me to go on Duty when I aint able. . . .

Your true Bro
H H. Orendorff

Camp Sherman Near Big Blk River, Miss
Aug 1st 1863

John W. Orendorff
Dear Brother,

. . . I left Snyders Bluffs last Monday Morning and got out to the Regt the next morning We had a fine time coming out here. . . . Our Camp is about 14 miles a little North of East of Vicksburg We are camped in a grove in a tolerable healthy place for this section of the country.

My health is getting pretty good I am beginning to feel like another man since I left the Bluffs. Capt Kelly had a pretty severe attack of the Cholera morbus the other day but is getting better now. . . .

As for seeing Dr Buck he was left back at the Bluffs very sick I am fearful he wont get well and you know it wont doe to go to Dr Morris. . . .

Yours with due Esteem
H H. Orendorff

Camp Sherman Miss
Aug 6 1863

John W. Orendorff
Dear Brother,

I will write you another letter this morning and let you know what I am doing, I am laying in Camp doing no Duty as usual. The last letter I got from you was Dated July 17th. I expect to get another letter from you soon.

I got a letter from Bro Washington yasterday dated July 26th he spoke of writing to you the same day.

John, I am not able for duty but am able to be around, I have had no Diarrhea since I came down here.

John Grove is still in Camp and is about the same as he was when he first came down Dr Morris dont give him any satisfaction in regard to Discharging him.

Capt Kelly has gone North on leave of Absence he started for Ohio. Pap Grigsby Major Bewly, & Sam Rockhold started home on Furlough yasterday morning. Have you any prospect of getting a Furlough or Discharge? You would stand no chance for either if you was to come to the Regiment. I would advise you to stay at Memphis or try and get North until cold weather.

Mr. Gibson is not very well he has symptoms of Ague.[40] Wm Dowler is pretty sick so is Ash Smith the rest of the Boys are convalescent.[41]

I will try and get detailed out of the company if I can get an easever birth any place if I cant I will put in for a Discharge if I dont get fit for Duty after awhile. I dont want you to send this letter home.

Your true Brother

Canton, Ill
Sep 16 1863

J W Orendorff Esq
Dar Bro

I am seated for the purpos of writing you a few lines to let you know how we are all getting along. My health is some better than it was when I first came Home but I am not well yet, I think some of getting an extension of my Furlough if I doe not I will be down to Memphis next week.

I tell you I took the folks on surprise when I came Home as they wer not looking for me at all I am having a very good time I meet a great many friends and some Copper Heads but the latter are minor. I have not been down to your place yet I have seen the children they are well and enjoying themselves Frances is growing very fast Charley is quite a little man.[42]

5 o'Clock P M

I have just got Home from Utica I took dinner at Jacob McCanns. . . .[43]

John are you coming Home Soon? or not if you are not I will bring you some things when I come down I wish you would come while I am at Home. Father and Mother dont want me to go back to the "Army" at all. I wish you would find out if there is any chance for me to get a position in Memphis (That is in a Hospital or Invalid Corps) If there is I would like to stop with you until I get right stout.

The health of the family is generally good Father Mother look thin they take a great deal of trouble about us, and feel bad when you write that you are un-well.

I went out to Fairview last week but did not see Dr Buck as he was at Galesburg his health is still poor.

I must dry up on this page

H H. Orendorff

Notes

[1] Henry's speculation was correct; Companies A and F were away from camp guarding a wood yard and water tank on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. This little outpost with the aid of several civilian scouts, ambushed the camp of a band of guerillas led by Captain Sol Street. Shortly after midnight, the Yankees rushed the guerilla garrison and fired at close range with devastating results: three killed, seven wounded, and five prisoners. Five escaped including Captain Street. *Reminiscences*, pp. 12-13.

[2] Private Louis Ketchum of Banner and Company K.

[3] Henry is suffering from diarrhea.

[4] Reverend Joseph Millsaps of Fulton County and chaplain of the 86th Illinois Infantry Regiment. *Fulton County Ledger*, September 2, 1862, p. 2.

[5] Private Isaac N. Ellis from Canton.

[6] Canton merchant John W. Ingersoll. His brother Henry was a corporal in Company C and a business partner. *History of Fulton County* (Chapman), pp. 554-55.

[7] Probably referring to John Rogers's father.

[8] Lieutenant Bernard Kelly.

[9] Although not personally present, Henry is relaying the action of about thirty men under Captain William Bishop, Company A, of Lewistown, who raided a guerilla camp inflicting heavy casualties. Again, the infamous Captain Sol Street narrowly escaped. *Reminiscences*, pp. 12-13.

[10] Reverend Peterson was dismissed April 17, 1863, for falsehood and absence without leave. "The regimental records show that on April 12, 1863, this officer was absent from his command without leave, and the papers upon which his order of dismissal was based show that under date of February 14, 1863, he reported to the Governor of Illinois that the Illinois State Agent of the United States Sanitary Commission at Jackson, Tennessee, had been furnishing supplies, particularly liquor, from stores in charge of said agent, to disloyal citizens of that town, and that nothing in the eating and drinking line from said stores had ever reached the patients in the hospital." These charges were found to be erroneous and, subsequently, Chaplain Peterson admitted they were false. Compiled Military Service Record for William S. Peterson and Letters Received by the Volunteer Service Branch; Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives.

[11] While guarding various points along the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, the regiment was ordered to Memphis on June 5 and then on to join Union forces in their drive to capture Vicksburg. The 103rd reached the Vicksburg war zone on June 11 via transportation down the Mississippi River. They were positioned at Snyders Bluff, being part of the 9th Army Corps, General John G. Parke commanding, and immediately engaged in strengthening fortifications there. *Reminiscences*, p. 14.

[12] Private St. Claire S. Sebree Company C of Canton.

[13] Dr. Richard Morris, Surgeon from Ellisville and Assistant Surgeon Sidney A. Buck of Fairview.

[14] Brother William Orendorff had gone to Memphis to accompany John home to Illinois.

[15] General Joseph E. Johnston commanded the Department of the West over both Major General Braxton Bragg in Tennessee and Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton at Vicksburg. Although Grant was on the offensive, part of his forces were defending against an anticipated attempt by Bragg to relieve Pemberton. Mark M. Boatner III, *The Civil War Dictionary* (New York, 1862), p. 441, and *Reminiscences*, p. 15.

[16] Lieutenant Henry Augustine, Company A, 55th Illinois Infantry and a resident of Canton.

[17] Lieutenant Colonel George Wright, Lewistown and Major Asias Willison, also from Lewistown.

[18] Commander of the Confederate forces defending Vicksburg, Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton.

[19] Private Charles Rockhold from Canton and a member of Company A, 55th Illinois Infantry. Illinois began designating Civil War infantry regiments with number eight; thus those with the lower numbers were the "older regiments."

[20] Private William Lowe, Canton; Company A, 55th Illinois Infantry.

[21] Brigadier General William S. (Sooy) Smith commanding 1st Division, 16th Army Corps. Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue* (Banton Rouge, 1964), p. 464.

[22] Orendorff is referring to Colonel Stephen G. Hicks, 40th Illinois and commander of the 2d Brigade, 1st Division, 16th Army Corps. *OR*, Su I, Vol. 24, Pt. 11, 154.

[23] Presumably Corporal William H. Jackson, Canton.

[24] Enlisted men were very prone to issue stinging criticisms of their officers who they believed inadequate. However, given a well-liked, caring and able commander, the ranks would practically worship their military leader. Henry obviously felt a special affection and respect for his old commander Captain Willaim Vandevander.

[25] Calling the water "rather poor" may have been an understatement. The collective judgment of regimental compilers of the unit's reminiscences concluded that: "inhabitants of that section of the country will under no circumstances drink or use in any way the well or spring water" depending instead on "rain water." *Reminiscences*, p. 15.

[26] Privates Major Buley of Marietta and William Hoar from Cuba.

[27] With typical aggression, Grant followed-up his victory at Vicksburg by ordering General William T. Sherman to attack Johnston's forces east of the Big Black River. "I want you to drive Johnston out in your own way and inflict on the enemy all the punishment you can. I will support you to the last man that can be spared." *OR*, Ser. 2, Vol 23, Pt. III, 473. The 103rd Illinois left Oak Ridge late in the afternoon of July 4 and camped near the Big Black River. The next two days were spent skirmishing with the Rebels and felling trees while trying to force a crossing. "No trees could be made to reach across, and the major [Willison] and Joseph Weston, Company I, swam the river, which worked up a rebel fire; kept up for some time; . . . . The major and Weston playing musk-rat, and returning across the river in good order." *OR*, Vol. 24, Pt. 11, 637. The passage was successfully made on July 6 on board a raft. *Ibid.*

[28] Private Merriam Stephens of Cuba.

[29] The other wounded were privates George Beam of Fairview and Company D, George Hart, Farmington and Company C and Thomas Smith a member of Company E and a resident of Canton. *Ibid.*

[30] Perhaps Private Thomas Clanin of Pleasant; he died at Snyders Bluff, July 3, 1863.

[31] It was estimated that more men were left behind at Snyders Bluff sick than accompanied the regiment in the field. "At one time there was only two Com. officers fit for duty in the entire Reg't. One Co. with 53 men present, had 23 excused. . . ." *Reminiscences*, pp. 18-19.

[32] Corporal Daniel Walters, Barne's Grove; privates William Lawrence, Canton; William Loveland, Fulton County, and Edmund Dery, Vermont.

[33] Henry's comrades had made steady progress pushing toward Jackson. Part of the regiment had skirmished with Confederate forces the day before and on the 10th, his regi-

ment was north of Jackson. *OR*, Vol. 24, Pt. 11, 637.

[34] First Sergeant Benjamin Wood of Buckhart.

[35] Sergeant Daniel Negley of Canton and Company A, 55th Illinois Infantry Regiment.

[36] Private John Grove from Marietta.

[37] Unknown to Orendorff, his regiment was on the march back toward Vicksburg. *Adjuant General's Report*, Vol. 5, 636.

[38] The suggestion of a substitute is puzzling. Certainly the Enrollment Act allowed the hiring of substitutes; however, that provision would not apply to a soldier already in the service.

[39] Private David Mayo of Vermont was not a doctor in the military; however, his proweess slaughtering livestock may have given him a surgical title.

[40] A fever, usually malarial, marked by regularly recurring chills.

[41] Private William Dowler, Marietta. Ash Smith may be musician William A. Smith, Bushnell.

[42] Brother John's children.

[43] Jacob McCann lived in Banner Township and two of his sons were Henry's comrades in the 103rd Illinois Infantry. *1850 Census of Fulton County Illinois*, p. 29.

4

It Seems Like Home To Get Back To The Regt

Cairo, Ill

Wm Orendorff
Dear Brother

We arrived here this morning all safe and in good order I am feeling very well. I suppose we will get a boat sometime to-day for Memphis

The Offices are not open until 9 O clock A M. it is now 8 O clk. I met with Charley Fellows[1] at Elpaso he is in fine spirits. I have nothing of importance to write I merely write to let you know I am getting along. I am anticipating a good time going down the river. . . .

Your True Brother
H H. Orendorff

Washington Hosp
Oct 16 1863 Memphis, Tenn

Miss S M. Orendorff
Dear Sister

I have spent the day with Brother John I am now seated at his table (or stand) and trying to pen a few thoughts for your consideration.

I have also been in company with Uncle John Lowe.

I arrived here at Memphis last night at 8 o'clock P M. I expect to start for the Regt in the morning. I think perhaps they are at Corrinth[2] I believe we are ordered to Tuscumbia. I am feeling very well much better than when I left Home I think I will get along fine. . . .

I am so glad that you didnt come, Bro John says he would like to see you but dont want you to come down here. Think this is a not good place for any young Lady. I cant find language to express my enjoyment at Home I certainly enjoyed myself finely but it seemed hard to leave so kind friends. . . .

My love to all
H H. Orendorff

Iuka Miss
19 Oct 1863

Brother Washington

. . . I got to Memphis Thursday eavening Oct 15 at 8 o'Clock I went to the Soldiers Home and staid that night and got breakfast next morning after breakfast I went up and saw John I spent Friday and friday night with him he is tolerable well and in good spirits he wanted to come with me to the Regt but I advised him to stay at the Hospital

I left Memphis Saturday morning for Corinth I stoped and staid over night and came on through to Iuka yasterday Our Regt are marching through from Memphis. by the way I found about twenty of our company here among then Orderly Snyder John Wise & others that you dont know. John Rogers Simion Prichard & George Weaver[3] are here they are all rather poorly. Mr. Gibson is with the Regt the boys say he is fine and fat. We look for the Regt in here about noon to-day. It is just one week this morning since I left Home I am feeling much better than I did when I left you. I hope you are all well and enjoying yourselves.

We are now getting out in a healthy part of the country and think we will be kept on the move for some time, We cant move any faster than we can repair this Rail-Road and we are allways more healthy when moving.

Washington when I got to Memphis and found our Regt had started out here I just felt like coming to them I soon saw enough of the Hospital to suit me I never would make a good wound dresser and the Hospital would be too confining for me, it seems like getting Home to get back to the Regt (or I had better say with the Boys of the Regt)

Company "K" are here, Jake Gibson, Johny Silvernail & Lewis Ketcham[4] & others of the company are generally well; All of the Boys that I have seen are well and in fine Spirits. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Iuka Miss Oct 24 1863

W. J. Orendorff, Esq.
Dear Brother

Enclosed you will find measures for two Pr of Boots one Pr is for S N Rockhold and the other pr is for my-self. Will you please hand the measures to Maynard & Co[5] and order them mad as soon as possible. I wish you would attend to having them expressed to us dont pay the express we will pay it here. Samuel will put the ten dollars $10.00 in this letter out of it you will please pay for his Boots & hand the surplus to his Brother John, I want a No 1 Pr of Boots so does Samuel I wish you would tell them to doe their best. We wer paid two months pay the other day. I will send you the Ten Dollars you let me have at the Depot at Canton and Ten more to pay for my Boots. I will send it by express.

The weather is cold and rainey here rather unpleasant. . . .

I am well and getting fat. "Army" rations agree with me finely. I was out on picket night before last it was rainey and rather disagreeable. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Iuka, Miss Oct 27 1863

Dear Parents & Home Circle.

this is a fine clear day. The sun shines out beautifully. We are packed and ready to start out on a march or some other expedition. report says that we are going to a little town by name of Eastport.[6] We dont know just when we will start our first order was to be ready to start at 12 o'clock to night. This is a very pleasant place and our Boys are fast regaining their health. I think the Regt is in better shape than it has been for a long time in fact better than it has been since we came South The boys are generally in good health. John Rogers is still poorly.

Wm Gibson is well, and in good spirits, so is Michael Augustine. & S N. Rockhold. in fact most of the Boys are getting well. Simion Prichard is quite poorly so is Geo. Weaver

My health is very good, much better than it was when I left Home, the weather for the last week has been rather rainey and cold but to-day it is warm and bright

I dreamed of Home last night. . . . Soldiers looked pretty rough to me when I first came back, but they look all right now

H H. Orendorff

Florence Ala Oct 30 1863

Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

. . . We left Iuka last Monday the first day we got to Eastport we crossed the Tennessee the next day and marched out 12 or 15 miles camped for the night and came on to this place yasterday I tell you we had some sore feet and aching limbs last night, to-day we are laying in camp it is rainey and rather unpleasant although it is not cold. It is hard telling where we will go from here report says that we are going to Decatur.

In regard to my health it is still improving very fast I never felt better in regard to health in my life. . . .[7]

I must tell you about our good dinner to-day we got it at a Negro Boarding House, What we had. Turkey, Roast Beef Sweet Potatoes, Irish do Corn Bread and splendid Coffee "Oh! who wouldent be a soldier". . . .
to be continued

Florence Ala. Nov 1 1863

. . . You will observe that I commenced writing last Friday. Well it rained all day friday and friday night. We wer called up earley yasterday morning to go out foraging we had breakfast before day-light and started quite earley, We went out about a mile & a half to old Senator Pattens[8] Plantation & got a lot of Sweet Potatoes, Chickens, Geese, Sheep etc, from there we went up the Tennessee River a little way went across to an island got a lot of Mules & Horses and then came

back to camp it was about half past four P M when we got in. I tell you we wer a good hungry set of fellows. When we started we dident bring along any rations for we thought we would be in for dinner. . . .

Your Baby Bro
H H. Orendorff

Winchester, Tenn Nov 11 1863

W S Orendorff
Dear Brother

I seat myself on my knapsack to write to you a few lines. We have been on a long and tedious march we left Florence Ala Sunday Nov 1st and marched every day since except one and that was last Monday. some of the time we had rations and sometimes we did not while we wer in Alabama we lived fine & foraged for all that was out, Our rout from Florence was via Rogers ville Fayetville & Salem We crossed Elk River on a stone bridge at Fayetville. The road from Rogers ville to Fayet V was very broken and rough From Fayet V to here was good. . . .

Bridgeport Tenn Nov 15 1863

Bro Wm

This is Sabbath Afternoon and we got in here a little afternoon. We have been having a long and tedious march. I have stood it fine I am very well. We are getting very close to the Rebs[9] report says that we go to Knoxville Tenn We cannot tell where our destination will be. . . .

I have stood the march much better than I expected to, I have gained every day, Camp life and marching seems to agree with me finely. . . . My love to all

H H. Orendorff

Hospt 4 Division 15 A.C
Nov 28th 1863

Dear Parents

I will try and write you a few lines letting you know of my welfare etc etc. I wrote to Bro Wm yasterday informing him of my slight wounds received on the Battlefield of Mission Ridge.[10] We have lost in our Regt in killed and died up to the preasent time 18.[11] Among the killed was Capt Walsh of Comp B 103 private Zerby of Comp B. Corpl Michael Augustine and H N Ware of Comp F John Silvernail Wm Carrol of Comp K Jonas Fletcher & Roswell Cochriel, Comp E Sargt Milburn Comp A & John Thompson.[12] the rest of the killed are unknown to me. A great many of our boys are severely wounded. I suppose you will see

a list of the killed & wounded before long you get this.

I was wounded in the first charge and went back to the rear & helped Dr Buck to dress wounds. I dident feel my wounds much until after I got still then they began to hurt, I was slightly bruised on the left leg just below the knee. I went out on the battlefield the next day after the Battle there wer some horrid sights which I will not attempt to describe.

Mr. Gibson was not in the fight he was left back with the teams I believe Jake got a little scratch on the upper lip. Jacob Frederich[13] is quite severely wounded. I cant think of all that were wounded.

I am well very well & have an appetite like a saw mill I dont want you to worry any about my wounds for they are all very slight. The end of my little finger on my right hand is only bursted open & my fore finger on my left hand is only pealed off a little the bruise on my leg is about well.

I think of going to the Regt as soon as my fingers get well.[14]

H H. Orendorff

My Love and best wishes to all. Excuse the writing for my finger is awfully in the way

Scottsboro, Ala. Jan 14 1864

Miss Maggie
Dear Sister

. . . Well it was pretty cold when we left Ills - hope it is warmer by this time. Well we staid in Peoria some time & had it very pleasant, . . . The next stop we made was at Reynolds, Ind - we laid there until Saturday 2 O'Clk P M, then we got down to Louisville Sabbath in the afternoon staid all night, next morning started for N Ville and got there in the eavening, We laid over there one day and two nights, then came to Stevenson & laid over night, & the next day came out here

Well we found our Company in good quarters at Corps Commissary doing duty there. . . .

I must tell a joke we got on a fellow as we came dow we stopped a while at Tullehoma We bought some chicken pies one follow found what he supposed to be a rats skull in his pie. I tell you we had a good laugh at him.

Sabbath Jan 17 1864

. . . I am on duty to-day but duty dont amount to much around here, it seems like getting Home to get back to the Company I am anticipating a good time while we stay at the Commissary. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro, Ala
Saturday morning Jan 25th 1864

W S. Orendorff, Esq
Dear Brother

This pleasant morning finds me in good health with the exception of my cold which is getting better. In writing to the rest I have given a description of our trip coming down. Nothing of particular interest has transpired since our arrival here. The boys of your acquaintance are generally well in fact the general health of the Regt is very good I dont think it has been better since we have been out.

We (our camp) are doing duty at Corps Commissary it is very thing the Boys have a good dry place to stand, and we get better rations here than we would at the regiment.

Wm Gibson is well and in fine spirits, I think he would like to go home on Furlough pretty well, but the prospects for Furloughes is very slim. Allmost all the old Regt are reenlisting in the veteren service and consequently get furloughs.[15]

Soldiers all seem to think another Spring Campaign may wind the thing up, for my part I will say a vigirous Spring & Fall Campaign will in all probabilaty see the last of this infernal rebellion which has allready hung on beyond all calculations Every thing seems to be quiet in this section of the country. A great many cittizens are daily coming in for various purposes Some to draw rations others to buy coffee rice etc of the soldiers.

Scottsboro Ala Jan 29th 1864

Bro Wm

I have nothing new to offer but as I have an opportunity to send a letter by the hand of a tent mate I will drop a few lines. I am well and fat. It is so darned warm down here that we have to draw off our coats and get in the shade to get comfortable, I suppose the Capt will start north this eavening but I will not trouble him to carry any letters for me. . . .I dreamed of being with you last night and having a good old time You cant imagine my feelings when I awoke and found myself laying in our Soldiers Hut which by the way is very comfortable and I think not much infested with Grey backs.[16]

H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala 4th Feb 1864
Canton Ills

Wm H. Parlin[17]

Wm We are having gay times, we (Our Compy) are still on detached service and are having as good times as Soldiers could reasonably ask for Comfortable quarters and plenty of rations. We have amusements of various kinds, vis Law

suits debates guard duty etc. Last eavening S N Rockhold was tried for "Stealing a pocket knife", he came off "not guilty", this eavening we had a debate a question was "Resolved that the signs of the times indicate a downfall of this American republic", decided in the negative, Champions was our Lieut. Bailey, & Odly Snyder, Pres, Wm H. Carpenter, Judgs Bewly & Orendorff[18] I tell you we had a gay time.

Do you know Odly D.A. Snyder? I presume you do. I must tell you a little joke that we are getting off on him, he has been grunting around here for a day or two and the signs of the times indicate that he has been eating too much is what is the matter with him. he went over to the Regt to-day & got a part of box of Pills came in set them upon the shelf & left them set there while he was out this eavening we got his box of Pills emptied it, then got sugar, melted it mixed in Flour blk pepper & hickory ashes worked it up to the right consistancy and then rolled out about the same number of pills as the box had previously contained, put them in the box set it upon the shelf all in perfect order. pretty soon in came the Ordly - got ready to go to bed took a couple of Orendorff's Vegetable Pills, and while I am writing is sleeping soundly on them After he gets well and uses them all up we will tell him the secret and give him the original Pills. I tell you we are awful wild and full of fun,

Your Uncle
Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala Feb 6th 1864

As Bro John has tried to write and given it up I will add a few words. John got here this morning. He is looking very well. I was glad to meet him. I think he will get along very well. . . .

Tell Wm. H. Parlin that Snyder is still taking my pills and is getting along very well. He has no more headaches and will soon be well. . . .

H H Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala Feb 13th 1864

Sister Maggie
Kind Sister

. . . Lieut. Chas H Suydam arrived here this morning, he said he saw Washington and F And W[19] the day before he started, he reports that you are all well. John is here and is all right, I am glad to have him with me, he is stout enough to stand a hard campaign I think. . . .

Thursday Feb 18th 1864

I will resume my writing I have no news of importance to communicate We (Comp F) are still on detached service, The regiment left here about a week

ago for Chattinooga[20] we have since had the intelligence that they are ordered to Knoxville I think we are very fortunate not to have to go with the regiment as it is pretty cold to be out of nights and in all probability they will see some hard service and perhaps some fighting. A campaign this time of the year is very hard on the troops. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala
Feb 22nd 1864

Dear Parents

I have nothing of importance to write but as Bro John is writing I will furnish a few lines. Brother John has been unwell but is better now. My health is excellent I never had better health.

The regt I suppose are up towards Knoxville somewhere I cannot tell when they will be back. We (Comp F) expect to be ordered back to the regiment when they return.[21]

Addis Van Midelsworth got here to-day. He says you are all well. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro, Ala
Feb 26th 1864

Dear Sister Maggie

. . . We are still at Corps Commissary and are having good times generally.

Kelly[22] got back to-day he hasent said any thing about seeing any of our folks and I haven't enquired he is a perfect pucillanement I dont go a cent on him.

Write often
H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala
Feb 28th 1864

Parents family circle & relatives generally
Dear Friends,

. . . Brother John seems to keep the bright side. . . . I think I will not have much trouble with him, he dont like the Capt much, that's all.

As for the different members of the company that you are acquainted with they are all very well, Mr. Gibson is well and fat as a fool. as for S N. Rockhold, he is very well I think he looks better than he has since he has been in the service, He is a good friend of mine and allways very kind. . . .

I am happy to say that I am very well and well satisfied. I am willing to serve my time out if need be, I am willing to sacrifice time and labor for the glorious cause in which we are engaged A Soldiers life aint so hard providing we have good health I couldnt ask for better health than I at preasent have. . . .

H. H. Orendorff

Scottsboro, Ala
March 3rd 1864

W S. Orendorff, Esq.
Dear Brother

I understand the regiment will be back here in a day or two they staid at Chattinooga last night I am somewhat fereful we will be ordered back to the regiment when they return. if we are I am ready for a march or allmost any thing that may come. I dont particularly like fighting but if it has to be done we must try and do our duty. I suppose we will soon be able to open the spring campaign, how it will open it is hard to tell. Some are thinking that our Corps will lay still awhile. We are looking with great interest to the results of Sherman expedition, We are confident he will make a big strike it seems that the Rebs cant comprehend this movements when they are looking for him in one place he will turn up in another. he is all right We have the greatest confidence in him.

I must stop and get supper.

March 4th 1864

. . . Well the boys are in good order generally, none complaining, Some of the boys from the regiment got in this morning on the train[23] I tell you they look hard and dirty but we cant expect any thing else as they have been out about a month without a change of clothes.

According to the rules of our Nation we may expect another President to be Inaugurated one year from to-day I truly hope that President Lincoln will be nominated & elected for the next term, for we find in him a man equal to the great task of settling our National difficulties. Washington, I think the prospect for closing up the "War" soon looks rather gloomy at preasent, dont you? it is true Sherman may be successful and capture Montgomery but he wont try to hold it, even if he does the Rebs can annoy him much, I think in all probability he will move on Atlanta from the rear.[24]

It is reported that Morgan[25] is figuring around on the South Side of the River with ten thousand cavalry. . . .

Love to all.

H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala
March 18th 1864

Miss Sarah M. Orendorff
Dear Sister

. . . Each day seems to impress the idea that our term of enlistment is on the wane two more days left and we will have but 17 months longer to serve Each day week and month seems to pass off in quick succession, if we only keep well 17 months wont seem long.

. . . The 6th Iowa Vol Regt have re-enlisted and started home yasterday. I saw John Dodge he wanted to know what word I would send to our Bloomington friends, I told him not to have any thing to do with Cousin James[26] he said he would go and steal a horse from the D---ned Cesesh while at home.

H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala
March 20th 1864

Wm J. Orendorff,
Dear Brother

. . . Seargt A J. Justice[27] and I went down to Huntsville yasterday and came back to-day, We had a fine time generally but Huntsville is not as fine a place as I expected to see, but we cannot expect a town to make a very good appearance after being occupied by both Confederate and Federal Armies. The most that Huntsville can boast of is her fine water privileges the whole city is supplied from one mammoth spring which affords as much or more water than "Coperas Creek" pretty big spring ther! The road from her to H-ville is crooked and rough and as coach cars are excluded from these parts, we have to ride on freight cars which as you know is not very agreeable to a Gentleman of as fine feeling as I possess, nevertheless the kind of transportation above alluded too is very preferable to "Walkers Line" Enough of this.

Every thing seems to be in good order in this section of the country. the 15th A.C. are on a big rest.[28] We dont look to more befor the middle of April or the 1st of May. Our Comp are still on detached service. Forrest is reported close on the other side of the Tennessee River. I can't say whether it is credited or not.

John, Gibson, Rockhold and others are well. Capt K uses me well. I have devoted 19 months to Uncle Sam. And 17 months will let HH. off if he lives; time passes rapidly to me.

H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala
Mar 31st 1864

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

. . . I enjoy myself finely and so does Brother John he had quite a little brash when he first came back but he is as stout and harty now as I ever saw him; I dont believe he likes soldiering any too well.

It is supposed we will leave here some time in April perhaps before the 20th, whare we will go it is hard to tell, and I dont care much if I only keep well. A soldiers life is a peculiar life We have to learn to take things cooly, and not be surprised at any thing that may happen. . . .

We (Comp F) are with the Regiment again. We left the Commissary last Saturday We have good quarters over here and every thing regular.

Your very truly yours Brother
H H. Orendorff

N B. Tell Bros Wm J & W S not to forget baby brother. Nothing more, I will act on the defensive and answer those that write to me

Scottsboro Ala
Apr. 10th 1864

Wm J. Orendorff
Dear Brother

another Sabbath has come and gon. . . . how have we spent the day? for my part I have spent it rather pleasantly considering the place and circumstances surrounding me, in the first place I laid abed until breakfast was ready (our whole company being on camp duty roll-call was dispensed of) got up and washed my self combed my head, and the drew up to a gay breakfast consisting of hard crackers rusty old bacon fried, and best of all Hot Coffee. I have seen the time I would turn up my nose at such a breakfast and on the other hand I have seen the time since I have been in the Army that I would give several Dollars for such a meal; After we got through breakfast I got a kettle of water warmed it and took a general bath and put on clean clothes.

Next of interest was Dinner which was similar to our breakfast, with the addition of Sour Crout not cooked but diluted with strong vinegar dinner over I sate down and read "Waverly"[29] a while, At 2 O.C P M. we had preaching by an agent of Sanitary Commission.[30] I tell you he came down on the Copperheads heavey, I believe he is an "Illinois man". this is the first sermon I have heard since I left home something over three months.

After servises Rockhold and I took a walk over to the Depot purchased a dried snits and peach mixed pie for the megar sum of 20 cts We masticated it and could have devoured two or three more but was afraid to stretch the wrinkles all at once, After returning to camp we took a cup of sage tea, by the way of variety and a chunk of soft bread, After tea Rockhold read another story in "Waverly" and then I got a light and commenced this poor sheet, but dont think John was idle all this time, he went over to 48th Regt Ills sutlers and got a hogs tongue, masticated the same, laid down, took a nap and feels bully, he is not in the tent I think he has

gone up Gibsons, Gibson and Snyder got awful home-sick but dont let their families know I said so.

We see by the papers that Illinois Copperheads have concluded to inaugurate "war" in the southern portion their of,[31] I think in all probability they soon get tired of it, I shall be glad if they will only keep coming out and designate them selves, I tell you I would like to have the privilege pulling trigger on some of the poor deluded devils Excuse me for using hard words for I cant help it. I dont know what will become of them in the next world for I dont think the Lord will let them go to the common hell to mingle with patriots though they be not christians. Part of the above may be vain but you must be the judge of that matter.

H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala
Apr 20th 1864

W J. Orendorff
Dear Brother

Enclosed you will find an express receipt for a box of clothing belonging respectively to Rockhold, Everly, Snyder and my-self. On receipt of box you will please notify persons interested to come and get coats and other traps belonging to the above named persons. I suppose each persons clothing is labeled mine is at least. I would not have sent my old greatcoat[32] home but there are only two alternatives either to send it home or throw it away. You will discover the charges are pre-paid.

I am respectfully your Brother.

H H. Orendorff

Scottsborg, Ala
Apr 24th 1864

Wm J. Orendorff
Dear Brother,

. . . We had preaching in our Regt last eavening by a Private of 99th Ind. he preaches a very good sermon, The Chaplains and Ministers of our Division have mad arrangements to hold services in the different Regiments that have no chaplains. they have formed circuits, they have announced services in our Regt next Tuesday Eavening. . . .

Our Division was on Grand review yasterday We were reviewed by Maj Gen John A Logan. those reviews are somewhat indicative of a move as the weather is getting pleasant I think the health of the troops would be better on the move than to be laving in camp, allthough the health of our Regt is splendid perhaps never better.

Brother, Keep cool, "the instigators of this Rebellion" will soon meet its just rewards. . . .

My love to all

H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala
Apr 25th 1864

Maggie Orendorff,
Dear Sister

. . . J W.[33] has gone out on Picket, this is the first picket duty we have done since we left the Commissary.

I have been having the Dentist work some on my teeth to-day he proposes to fill 2 cavities. . . .

Since the most popular Horse in our Division has been stolen and shiped to Stevenson his name was "Old Potomac" that crosses and re-crosses the Rapidan, there is a One Hundred Dollar reward offered to any person for the return and safe delivery of said Horse.[34]

I have never had the pleasure of riding the "Potomac Horse" yet but dont know how soon my turn will come, that is if he is retaken and returned to Scottsboro. The Potomac is very tall A person has to have a ladder in order to mount him without too much exertion. I will give you a description of him. He is made entirely of wood. he has no main or tail. Two forks about 8 or 9 feet long are set in the ground about ten feet apart and a pole 8 or 10 in diameter is laid across this forms the notable Potomac Horse. And a man that rides him has to sit perfectly still or he will fall off. I dont want to ride him Would you?

Wm Lowe was up to our Regt on a visit last friday and staid all night in camp. he was looking very well.

Love to all
H H. Orendorff

Scottsboro Ala
Apr 28th 1864

As we have marching orders we are packing up a few articles to send home By Express. John sends an overcoat cape and a few other articles of minor importance. S N. Rockhold sends a Blanket. I send my preasent that I recd last winter, while at home.

We dont want to carry any thing more than we can help.

From Preasent indications we are going to Huntsville or beyond. We are not anticipating very hard times soon.

I am as ever.

H H. Orendorff

Notes

[1] Sergeant Charles Fellows of Canton and a member of Company K.

[2] Having regained its health, 103rd Illinois received orders to assist in the relief of the Army of the Cumberland beseiged at Chattanooga. They sailed up the Mississippi River passing through Memphis on October 11. By October 16th, the regiment was marching through northern Mississippi near Corinth. *Reminiscences*, pp. 19-21.

[3] Privates Simeon Prichard, Company F of Canton and George Weaver, Company E from Banner.

[4] Privates John Silvernale, Canton, and Louis Ketchum of Banner.

[5] L. C. Maynard and Company, a general store located on the west side of the square in Canton. *Fulton County Ledger*, August 5, 1862, p. 3.

[6] Henry's information is accurate; the regiment started for Eastport, Mississippi, on the 27th. *Reminiscences*, p. 22.

[7] After being rejuvinated by his visit at home, the physical activity of a march surely bolstered Henry's strength and improving health.

[8] State Senator Robert M. Patton. William Garreh, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama, For Thirty Years* (Atlanta, 1872), p. 737.

[9] Henry's sense of the situation is nearly right. Sherman's army is getting into position near the enemy but opposite Chattanooga rather than Knoxville. *Adjutant General's Report*, Vol. 5, 637.

[10] General Bragg had effectively "bottled-up" General William Rosecrans commanding the Army of the Cumberland at Chattanooga, virtually cutting off his course of supply. Given the stalemate, the military command was reorganized with Grant as commander of a new Military Division of Mississippi and Rosecrans relieved. After reestablishing an improved supply line, Grant acted to lift the seige, commencing the three day Battle of Chattanooga. Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, *How the North Won* (Urbana, 1983), pp. 458-60. The third day, November 25, culminated with the decisive assault of Missionary Ridge. "Grant ordered Sherman to turn the enemy position by moving against Tunnel Hill and the North end of the ridge. Hooker would move from Lookout Mountain to cut off retreat routes while Thomas hit the center when Sherman reached the ridge." *How the North Won*, p. 461.

Henry's regiment belonged to Sherman's Army of the Tennessee. His company along with two others, saw heavy action at Missionary Ridge. Led by Major Willison, these companies joined the 40th Illinois in successfully overrunning Confederate skirmishers at the base of the first hill. After regrouping and reinforced with the 46th Ohio, the 2d Brigade's attack force charged up over the crest of a higher hill and directly into canister loaded cannon fire and massed musket fire. The line closed with the Rebels but was stopped; repeated attempts to dislodge the enemy failed. *Reminiscences*, pp. 26-28 and *OR*, Vol. 31, Pt. 2, 636-37.

[11] The 103d lost fifteen killed in action and seventy-four wounded. The severity of its sacrifice is more fully appreciated by noting that just 236 went into the engagement and its losses represented 43 percent of the brigade's KIA's and 40 percent of the wounded. *OR*, Vol. 31, Pt. 2, 87 and *Reminiscences*, p 29.

[12] By reporting those dead, Orendorff could at least relieve the families of other soldiers. Captain William Walsh of Fairview; Private William Zerby, Young Hickory; Private John Ware, Vermont; Private William Carroll, Canton; Corporal Jones Fletcher, Orion; Private Roswell Cockrell, Orion; Sergeant John Milburn, Lewistown; and Corporal John

Thompson, Liverpool, also of Company A.

[13] Private Jacob Frederick from Banner and a member of Company E.

[14] Henry stayed in the hospital at least through December 3 and then went home to recuperate. He returned to his regiment in early January, 1864.

[15] Concerned for the potential loss of seasoned troops, the Federal government issued orders in June, 1863, encouraging veterans to reenlist for three more years or the duration by offering $400 bounties and thirty-day furloughs. Bell I. Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank* (Garden City, 1971), p. 342.

[16] Lice.

[17] Henry's nephew, William Henry Parlin.

[18] First Lieutenant James Bailey of Vermont. Henry may have errored in reporting the participants for the only Carpenter in the regiment was Private John H. Carpenter of Ellisville and Company B.

[19] Presumably Father and Washington.

[20] On February 11, the 103rd Illinois Infantry embarked northeastwardly, marching to Cleveland, Tennessee, just north of Chattanooga, and then turning south, moved to Dalton, Georgia. The purpose of the movement being to occupy the attention of Rebels and dissuade their transfer to Mississippi where Sherman was conducting his Meridian Raid. *Reminiscences*, pp. 39-40.

[21] Company F remained on detached duty with the Commissary Department. The remainder of the 103rd had recently moved to Cleveland, Tennessee, and on February 23, 1864, would participate in diversionary activities in northern Georgia helping to contain Confederate forces while Sherman launched his Meridian Campaign aimed at destroying railroads and military supplies. *Adjutant General's Report*, Vol. 5, 637-38.

[22] Presumably Captain Bernard Kelly.

[23] These first arrivals were the sick and disabled; the effective part of the regiment returned to Scottsboro March 5. *Reminiscences*, p. 41.

[24] Henry's comment was pure speculation as Sherman had concluded his Meridian Raid and returned to Vicksburg March 4. E. B. Long, *The Civil War Day By Day* (Garden City, 1971), p. 472.

[25] Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan.

[26] James Orendorff.

[27] Corporal Andrew Justice of New Salem.

[28] Typical of the sequence of military strategy and operations was a period of garrison duty during the winter to regroup and refit for a spring campaign.

[29] *Waverly Magazine*. Philip Van Doren Stern, *Soldier Life in the Union and Confederate Armies* (New York, 1961), p. 236.

[30] The United States Sanitary Commission ". . . served as a valuable civilian auxiliary to the medical bureau of the war department in tending the wounded and ministering to the morale and comfort of the soldiers. It may be regarded as the forerunner of the Red Cross. . . ." *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, p. 488.

[31] Henry's persuasion caused him to be a reader of the *Canton Weekly Register*. He had probably just read a page one article entitled "A Rising Storm," Copperhead Preparation For a Fire-In-The-Rear" which appeared in the April 4 issue. The story, reprinted from the *Chicago Post*, related that "A large number of copperhead members [Congressmen] from Indiana and Illinois have gone home within the last two weeks, and for no other purpose than to organize the 'Knights.' Among those . . . is Wm. J. Allen, representative from one of the southern districts of Illinois. . . . This gentleman, it is well known, wanted to

organize the men of Southern Illinois and put them in the rebel army." *Canton Weekly Register*, April 4, 1864, p. 1.

[32] Orendorff is referring to his overcoat, a sky-blue, single breasted coat with cape; it covered the body down to mid-calf on the leg. Soldiers notoriously discarded these heavy garments. Francis Ford and Arthur Wise, *Uniforms of the Civil War* (New York, 1970), pp. 24 and 41.

[33] Referring to his brother.

[34] Apparently newly commissioned Brigadier General William Harrow, seeking to modify behavior, introduced a large wooden horse upon which offenders were mounted with their punishment on display. General Harrow had previously commanded in the Army of the Potomac; western troops looked upon easterners with disdain assuming they were soft and inferior. Thus, naming this stead "Old Potomac" symbolized a carefully considered sneer. The ranks blatently attack this annoying attempt at discipline. They taunted the general with cries of "Bring out your Potomac Horse" and "some waggist fellows wrote out some highly displayed advertisements of the 'Potomac Horse' and posted them throughout camp, and finally one night the men took it down and sent it to McPherson, with a note tacked on it, telling him to furnish him plenty of straw and use him carefully, as he was Potomac stock and unused to hardship." *Reminiscences*, pp. 33, 45 and 46.

Michael Augustine, Corporal, 103rd Illinois, and one of Henry Orendorff's tent mates. Killed in action November 25, 1863.

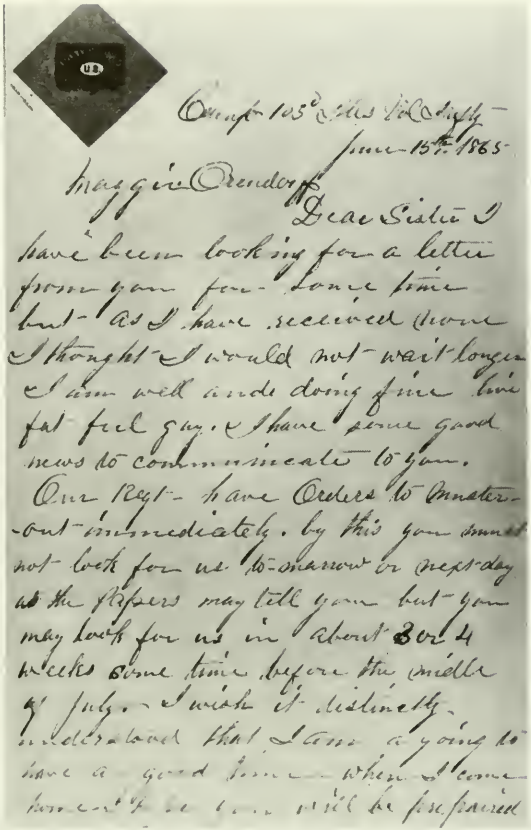
Henry Harrison Orendorff, c. 1862.

John Orendorff, father of Henry Orendorff.

Jacob M. Augustine, Captain, 55th Illinois. Killed in action June 27, 1864.

Sarah Orendorff Riley ("Maggie"), Henry Orendorff's younger sister.

Margaret Sale Orendorff, mother of Henry Orendorff.

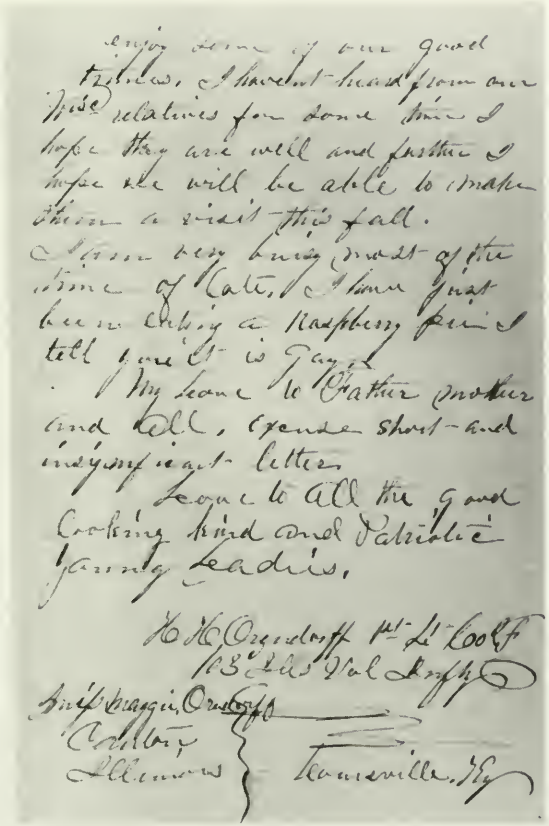


Camp 103d Ills Vol Infty
June 15th 1865

Maggie Orendorff

Dear Sister I have been looking for a letter from you for some time but as I have received none I thought I would not wait longer I am well and doing fine live fat feel gay. I have some good news to communicate to you.

Our Regt have Orders to Muster-out immediately. by this you must not look for us to-marrow or next day as the Papers may tell you but you may look for us in about 3 or 4 weeks some time before the middle of July. I wish it distinctly understood that I am a going to have a good time when I come home I hope you will be prepaired



enjoy some of our good times. I haven't heard from our Wise relatives for some time I hope they are well and further I hope we will be able to make them a visit this fall.

I am very busy most of the time of late. I have just been eating a Raspberry pie I tell you it is Gay.

My Love to Father mother and all, excuse short and insignificant letter.

Love to All the good looking kind and Patriotic young Ladies.

H H Orendorff 1st Lt Col F
103d Ills Vol Infty

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Canton
Illinois

Louisville, Ky

Orendorff's June 15, 1865, letter to his sister Maggie indicating when the regiment would be mustered-out.

William Parlin, husband of Caroline Orendorff Parlin.

Caroline Orendorff Parlin, Henry Orendorff's older sister.

Washington Orendorff, oldest brother of Henry Orendorff.

William Orendorff, older brother of Henry Orendorff.

5

In The Field Near Atlanta

In the Woods near Rossville Ten
4 miles South of Chattinooga
May 5th 1864

Wm J.

We took up the line of march Sunday morning at 7 O'c A.M. We have been 5 days on the march, We have been taking it easy marching at the rate of 10 to 15 miles per day until to-day we made 20 miles, I tell you it makes grunt as usual,

John stands it very well. I am still fat and gay and calculate to try and keep it so. We are ignorant of our destination but it looks as though we are to form the right wing of an expedition that will move on Dalton Ga I guess we will find out what we are to do in the course of time.[1]

Last Sunday we marched about 10 miles Camped in the woods had a gay time Monday we only marched 10 miles, Tuesday we marched about 12 miles. As we have a Potomac General we began to think he would give us some light marching but yasterday he gave us 15 miles and to-day 20 so you see he knows something, The boys feel pretty sore to-night and step quite proud.

H H. is good for any reasonable march Our recruits grunt and hump I guess they want veterans & I guess H H. wont. . . .

Our neighbor boys are well I believe there is no one sick.

Our Regt numbers 400 on this march. . . .

H H. Orendorff

2 miles West of Calhoun Ga
May 17th 1864

. . . I suppose you will have an account of the fighting that has been going on. We laid in line of battle 4 or 5 days and wer up in range 3 days the first day we wer held in reserve the shells bursting close around me & wounding our Major and spoiling several guns, I tell you it is not very pleasent to have the enemy shells come popping around a fellow, but such are the fortunes of "War". One man in Co B was killed by the falling of a tree A man in Co A was wounded through the foot by his own gun, four others wer wounded two from Co "H" 1 from Co "E" 1 from Co "B". these are all the casulaties in our Regt I believe.[2]

6 O'clock P M. May 19th We are laying in an open field fronting a patch of timber which is not scarce by the way. I tell you these Lofty Pines are grand while the smaller brush aint so grant especially when we have to march through it in line of Battle.[3]

H H. O

Thursday May 19th 1864
Near Kingston Ga

We are all right & in fine spirits & making rapid progress into the Confederacy. I am inclined to think Johnson will make a stand at Atlanta but I think we can clean them out.

I dont know when I will have a chance to mail this, Our facilaties for sending mail back are poor, I some times think it is hardly worth while to try to send mail to the rear. . . .

We hope to wipe Rebellion out this Spring & Summer

Reports from Grants Army are cheering We hope he will Doe it to them. I want him to give Lee a sound thrasing. . . .[4]

H H. Orendorff

In the field Big Santy Ga[5]
June 11 1864

W S. Orendorff, Esq
Dear Brother,

. . . Well we came out here Thursday June 9th Just one Brig & Wilders Brig of Cavel & mounted infty, We had a gay time fired on Johnnie Reb a few times & then returned to camp in good order, Wilder lost several in wounded Our Brig wer not engaged at all,[6] As we went back I stopped at 86th Ills & Chap Millsass, he is looking very well now, allthough his health has been poor for some time past he expressed himself as being glad to see me, this is the first I have seen him since he came to his Regt.

Yasterday we came out here & have been laying in reserve. I dont know when we will move, We have pretty heavy reports of Artillery both in our front & to our right. It is reported in camp that Gen Hooker[7] captured 2,000 prisoners today I cant say whether it is reliable or not.

Washington I have no doubt but you will be much surprised when you come to see the losses of our Army. Summed up we have done considerable fighting since we first met the enemy at Dalton and Resaca.[8] I have not heard from Bro J W. since he left Kingston but hope he is getting along well. I hope to get through the preasent campaign all right but it is hard to tell what will happen.

You must not look for letters from me often.

I saw S N R, Thursday morning. He was doing well. Still in Hosptl.

Washington I wish you would send me by mail a No. 7 Blk Hat medium crown & rim Father wears the same size, let it cost from $3.00 to $4.00, Please send it soon as convenient & oblige your Bro

I sent for some cotton pants but have since learned that P M Bidamon[9] refuses to send cotton pants of that character, So I dont care. . . .

When you find out where John is let me know & if you write too him tell him too write to me, I fear he has a pretty severe wound but hope for the best.

H H. Orendorff

Big Shanty Ga
June 16th 1864

Wm J. Orendorff,
Dear Brother,

. . . Wm we did a big thing yasterday, We (our Division) Moved out yasterday about 11½ O'c A M by the left flank about 2½ miles to the left took our position with our 2d Brig in front throwed out skirmishers & let them figure a while, then we were Ordered forward under cover of a hill or crest & there take a position & hold it, We gained the prosition but there was no stopping there we moved on clear over the hill & it was with the utmost exertion that our officers stoped us

Our movement was wholly uncovered & across open fields, We charged over a mile (I think) & had quite a creek to cross. The most of our boys plunged right through it, the water was about 2½ feet deep. I got across by getting only one foot & leg wet.[10] The casualties in our Regt amounted 12 in killed & wounded There were three killed or mortally wounded so that they died soon, Their names were Goldsmith of Comp I & Saml Spencer of Cop E & WM Ashton of Comp H. Wounded Ordly D A. Snyder and Wm D. Lawrence Comp F.[11] Ordly S is severly wounded by a musket ball it struck the tip of his nose on right side passing through his upper jaw & breaking it knocking the teeth out of lower jaw passing on through & grasing his left shoulder. The bone had to be taken out of his upper jaw, he says it dont pain him much. I hope he will get along well.

Wm Lawrence was wounded by a piece of a shell in the stomach We wer fearful last night that he was mortally wounded but this morning he seemed quite piert and I hope he will get along well.[12] I forgot to say we took about 500 prisoners they were regular Devils & kept firing until we got right on too them. Our Officers call yasterdays affair one of the grandest things of the Campaign not a man they say wavered or shrank from his post.[13]

Some may call it fun but I dont. I am pretty sore to-day but otherwise am feeling pretty well.

I hope to hear from John soon. . . .

We are laying in reserve to-day. the Rebs have a strong position here & I think will fight pretty hard I hope to come off all right but we cant tell who will fall.

They had quite an artillery Duel in front of our preasent position to-day 11½ O.C. A.M. but such things doe not surprise us any. The Rebs have used but little Artillery here as yet. . . .

Yours as ever
H H. Orendorff

1½ Miles S.E. Big Shanty Ga
June 20th 1864

Dear Parents,

I am well & hope you are the same. Nothing of importance has transpired since my last, in which I gave a description of our last fighting of 15th June, I will here add those that wer wounded in that charge are getting along fine. The Rebels still hold Kinisaw Mt[14] Our men keep trying to shell them & they occasionally open on our forces.

We are still in the rear of our forces & I think are held as reserve, a position rather desirable.

I think there was heavy fighting both to our right & left yasterday but to-day it is more quiet.

We have had a goodeal of rain within the last ten days or two weeks, Yasterday it rained hard most of the afternoon but quit before night, Consequently we got a good nights rest.

To-day the sun shines & it is more pleasent. The cool wet weather that we have been having is fine for the wounded.

Father & Mother, I often think of you & our comfortable home & long for this cruel war to end, but I am fearful the end is not nigh. The Rebs hold on with great tenacity. . . .

Our Regt has suffered considerable since the opening of the preasent campaign. Our casualties amt to 60 or 65 killed, wounded & missing.

The 55th Ill Veterans have joined their command,[15] I visited the Regt the other day the boys are generally looking well, Wm Lowe was looking fine So are Capt & Lieut Augustine[16] Our Regt begins to look quite small, I believe there are only 3 Canton boys now preasent in our Comp. Namely J Wise Wm J Everly & my-self. The boys generaly well & in good spirits but are not spoiling for a fight as some Reporters represent although we will try and doe our duty when we are called upon. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Interior, Ga-
June 20th 64

Sister Maggie,

. . . Our position is about 4 miles right in front of Kinisaw Mountain We can see our shells bursting along up on the side of the mountain & can see the flash & smoke from the Rebs guns. I dont hardly think they can shell us here from

the top of the mountain or they would be trying it. Some of the prisoners we take are very saucy & some are not them that we took on 15th wer mostly Veterans & had re-enlisted for the war they belonged to 40th Alabama, they kept shooting until we got within ten steps of them. . . .

I dont think we will get into Atlanta for some time yet. They have stoped us here 10 days allready. . . .

H H. Orendorff

In regard to our sleeping out on the ground while the Darkeys sleep in the tents it is all false, if you hear any one say the Negro is treated better than we soldiers are tell them they lie. I think we will stay here this winter We are verry comfortably situated now I would like to have the privlege of kicking the posterior of some of those blamed fools that write such blames infernal lies, home to their friends.

Near Kinisaw Mountain Ga
June 23rd 1864

W S & Wm J Orendorff, Esq.
Dear Brothers

. . . Our Regt havent been engaged since the 15th inst, the particulars which I gave you in a former letter. I would give more of the particulars of the engagement in which Bro J W was wounded if I thought I could make it interesting.

Bro J W, was on the skirmish line when the Rebs charged, driving our skirmishers in behind our works.

I understand that "Frank Leslie Artist"[17] was on hand the other day (June 15th) when we mad that charge.

I must say that we deeply feel the loss of our brave, Noble & Patriotic Col he was a good man & looked well to the comfort and welfare of his men,[18] Col G W Wright is commanding the Regt the boys generally like him well.

I havent had a letter from Bro John yet, but look for one soon, I hope he will get along well but fear he will be along time getting well, I have given as good description of his wound in my former letters as I am able too.

Our Division are still held in reserve, the Rebs & our Batteries open pretty briskly occasionally & sometimes we hear pretty brisk skirmishing. We know but little of what is going on, but we doe know that the Rebs still hold Kinisaw Mountain & by the Rail Road it is 28 miles to Altanta.

The boys are generally well. Some few are complaining of Chills and Diarrhea.

Wm our Regt is quite small to what it was when we left Peoria Ills The Regt would make about three good full companies. There are but three of us Canton boys now preasent in our camp.

Some think that Johnston is a going to make his main stand at this point but it is hard to tell whether he is or not. I think he has got a bully position here but

in all probability he can find many good positions down here in Georgia, I suppose his present position is harder to flank than it was at Dalton & Resaca & Dallas all of which wer splendid positions. The latest news from Grant is rather encouraging I hope he will be successful & utterly destroy Lees Army, that is break it up, or disorganize it.

Washington, I wrote to you to send me a Hat by mail You will please forward the same as earley as convenient as my old one has some "hur" holes in & the rain trickles down some times. I must say that I cant afford to run the Reaper this year for you, as we are part and parcel of Pop Shermans Threshing Machine & it has to run cold or warm, wet or dry & sometimes day and night.

Saml Rockholds would, I hear, is doing fine his little finger was shot off & amputated just a little below the middle joint. Wm Gibson is back at the Hospt cooking for Surgeon Morris & Buck, his health is just tolerable good. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Near the foot of Kinisaw Mountain
June 30th 1864

Dear Sister,

Your kind and ever welcom letter of 12th inst came to hand in good time and was perused with a degree of pleasure undisribably by me.

I wrote to Bro Wm the other day & gave the particulars of our last battle of 27th inst.[19]

I am glad to learn Capt Kelly is not dead as reported.

We have no commiss officer left in our Comp since Lieut Bailey was killed, I tell you we lost many a Brave and Noble Soldier in that assault.[20] I truly hope we will never be called upon to make another such an assault but you know soldiers are subject to Orders of their Officers and our officers are subject to superior officers & so it goes.

A good many of us are feeling un-well owing too our excessive exposure etc. tomorrow it will be two months since we started on the preasent campaign.

I received my hat by mail 28th inst It is rather small but I guess it will soon get big enough, I am well pleased with it. . . .

I have been told that Col Wright will start Home to-day. . . .[21]

I saw Henry Augustine and Wm Lowe yasterday Henry is feeling very bad about the loss of his "Noble and Patriotic" Brother, his body as well as many more is still laying on the field all efforts to recover them being fruitless.[22]

The bodies of G W. Moss Lieut Montgonery Jacob Maxwell & some others were gotten off, but those that fell up near the works wer unable to recover. Orderly Putnam of Comp "H" was wounded I believe. . . .[23]

Love to all
H H. Orendorff

Chatahoochee River
July 16 64

Wm J Orendorff
Dear Brother

. . . This war is an awful thing & is the cause of much suffering not only in the field but our dear friends & relatives suffer much in mind, Oh how I sympathize with the friends of our fellow comrades. . . .[24]

We are in camp on a beautiful grassy nole close to the river, The river runs nearby East & West right here We are on the South side,[25] The country is quite broken & well watered.

Our cavalry report the enemy not nearer than 8 or 9 miles in force.

I suppose you have seen an account of the capture of the factory at Rosswell and the 500 women, I just wish they would issue them to us soldiers I believe they sent them back to Marietta,[26] I wish our Regt was back there on Provo Duty. . . .

As ever
H H Orendorff

Decatur Ga
July 20 1864

Wm J. Orendorff Esq.
Dear Brother

. . . We left the Chatahoochee River near Rosswell Factory Sunday July 17th and went out towards Stone Mountain & kept in supporting distance of our cavalry while they tore up the R R leading from Atlanta to Augusta[27] We have done no fighting since we left Kinnisaw Mt. Our Regt are detailed for train guard, I dont know how long we will get to stay with train but I hope during the campaign, We have done our share of fighting for this campaign. We have done fine for grub for the last few days We are getting lots of forage in shape of fresh meat Green Apples Black Berries & some Potatoes. . . . 21st We moved up about 2½ miles towards the front to-day the boys are laying around in the shade and feel quite comfortable, I ate so many Blk Berries yasterday that I came near getting sick & to-day I took another good feed. Decatur has been quite a nise country town but the country in the vicinity is any thing but good. I was much surprised in this country I expected to find a fine rich country out here but it is not the case. A great majority of the country is uncultered & the soil is of very poor quality sandy mixed with stones.

Near Atlanta
July 25th 1864

Wm We have been through another hard fight on the eavening of 21st We came back to the Brigaid that night We built works & the next day 22nd the Rebs fell back in our front We moved up to their works and commenced to charge them About 12 OC M we heard firing off to our left and in our rear & a short time it was assertained that the Rebs wer flanking us, We had a desperate fight the Rebs charged repeatedly but wer repulsed with heavy loss[28] The 17th A.C. lost considerably as did the 16th Our Corps I dont think lost so heavey. Casualties in our Regt wer 10 I believe, 3 killed viz Corp Charles Buck of our Comp. 1st Lt Blair of Co D, he was commanding our Comp.[29]

Near Atlanta Ga
July 26th 1864

J W. Orendorff, Esq,
Jefferson Barracks, Mo Ward C
Dear Brother

Your kind letter of 15th inst & your former letter came to hand to-day. I am glad you are getting along so well. I hope that your wound will get so that you can go home soon.

We have pretty rough times since you left us & have done some hard fighting & lost many a good Boy. Among the killed are G W Moss, Lt J M Bailey & Charley Buck, Charley was killed 22nd inst The Rebs tried too flank us & we had a hard fight. Our loss was heavey but that of the Rebs must have been much heavier, they must have lost in killed 2 or 3 too our one as they charged repeatedly after we had got up a light line of works. I tell you they fought with great determination.

The loss in our Regt on the 22nd was only 3 killed & 6 or 7 wounded. The killed were Lt Blair of Comp D you know he was orderly of D when you left the Regt he was commanding our Comp when he was killed, Charley Buck & a man by the name of Smith[30] in Comp G was killed I am not acquainted with the wounded & think you are not or I would take some paines to find out their names.

John were having a long & hard campaign and there is no sign of its closing soon at least we cant see it, I truly hope the "war" will soon close. I am standing it very well for me, the health of our Comp is pretty good. I suppose Odly Snyder told you all about the charge in which he was wounded. . . .

We can doe nothing towards forwarding your "Descriptive Roll"[31] until the campaign ends or our Camp Equipage or Comp Books come up. So you will have to wait until the proper time comes.

July 29th 1864

Dear Bro

On morning of or night of 27th we withdrew from our position on the left &

moved clear around to right flank, & yasterday morning we came on to the Rebs & had quite a hard fight.[32] Our 15th A C alone being engaged. We dident loose very heavey as we had some protection behind logs & railes. Pierce Rich[33] being the only one killed in our Company Wise & Vorhees wer slightly wounded but are both with the Company[34]

We had 4 killed in the Regt yasterday & 10 or 12 wounded I think. . . .

Write home & tell them I am all right yet.

H H. Orendorff

In field near Atlanta Ga
July 31st 1864

Dear Parents,

I have not directed a letter especially to you for a long time, I have still been writing to some of the Family when an opportunity offered is the only excuse I have too offer. You know our 15th, 16th & 17th Army Corps from the "Army of the Tennessee" and was commanded by Maj Gen McPhersons Army after crossing the Chattahoochee River McPhersons army formed the left wing of Shermans Army We moved on to & cut the Atlanta & Augusta R R on 22nd A part of Hoods Army moved too our left turned our flank & came very near cutting the 17th AC all to pieces, the 16th A C, allso suffered severely, only a part of our corps was engaged consequently we dident suffer so much, in my former letters I spoke of our casualties on that day

On the night of the 26th or morning of the 27th the Army of "The Tennessee" withdrew from our position on the left & moved clear around to the right & on 28th our corps came in contact with quite a Reb force & we had a hard open field fight, Our boys had some protection behind logs fence railes Trees etc The Rebs charged on us repetedly but our boys repulsed them with heavey loss. The Rebel loss was I should think as much as 3 or 4 too our one I know their killed was more than that too ours.[35]

Father, we have had hard marching on this campaign & a great deal of fatigue & lots of hard fighting, but I suppose this is all required to end the "War". Since Hood has had command of the Reb Army I tell you he has lost a host of men I think he has lost more than Johnston did all the way from Dalton to this place.

It will be three months to-morrow since we started from Scotts-boro A pretty long campaign & there is not much prospect of it closing soon as we can see, although I hope it may. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Near Atlanta Ga
July 31 1864

Sister Maggie

. . . We had a hard fight on the 28th inst it was an openfield fight but our forces throwed up some logs railes etc behind which they protected themselves, the Rebels came against us in strong and heavey columns but our boys poured in such a heavey and deadly fire that their colums soon began to waver & they had to fall back with heavey loss; Casualties in our Regt were 17, 4 of which were killed. Pierce Rich of our Comp was killed and Jacocks of Comp K & Call of Comp A & Wm Bolan of Comp H, Wise & Varhees of F were wounded (but very slightly). Seargt Tanner of Comp C was severely wounded in leg & had to have it amputated above the knee.[36] I might give the names of the wounded, but think you would not know them.

I guess there was no troops engaged on 28th except our Corps. I wrote home after the fight on the 22nd inst in which I mentioned that Charley Buck fell a victim of a Reb ball. Charley was a good soldier a faithful Christian, We miss him much, May the Lord protect, shield and comfort his Family. May they feel their loss is his gain, I tell you he was a Noble Patriot and was allways at his post when duty called May the Lord shield & protect the rest of us.

I mess with Wm J Everly and A J. Justice, Jeff Everly as we call him is a good boy & is very kind to me So is Seargt A J. Justice, the boys are all very kind to each other. I miss Bro J W & S N. Rockhold very much Saml has not written to me or I have had no Letter from him since he left the Company. I have taken care of his mail & to-day started it in search of him I have been told that he was at Altoona Ga nursing in Hosptl. if his folks know whare he is tell them to write to me so that I may know whare to direct his letters I hope he is getting along well. . . .

Our Regt wer on Picket or skirmish line yasterday but wer relieved in the eavening came in behind our main line and got a good nights rest, the first for some time, this morning we wer furnished tooles & we throwed up a line long enough for our Regt in the rear of the main line

. . . I must close. I am well and stand the fatigue & exposure pretty well. I was not right in the fight on 28th on account of being quite unwell I was left a little to the rear with the knapsack & other traps. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Near Atlanta Ga
Aug 6th 1864

W S Orendorff, Esq.
Dear Brother

. . . I am well but feel some what worn down by fatigue heavey duty etc.

We occupy the front line at preasent and are continually under fire. We have splendid works & while I write the musket balls are whisteling over our heads and occasionally we are interupted by the more deafening roar of Artillery, there

is a battery planted just to our right I tell you it jars us and makes our heads ache, We havent done anything but skirmish fighting since 28th of last month, John Durham of Comp I was wounded in a skirmish charge the other day I think his wound is not very severe[37] I tell you we have too keep low for the sharp shooters have good range on our works.

A notice has been recd at Regt Hdqrs that Bro John was sent home from Jefferson Barracks, I hope he will enjoy himself while at Home.

Washington this is one of the hardest campaigns that was ever carried on I suppose it is a little over three months since we left Scottsboro & I think we have been under fire of the enemy over 40 days, in the mean time we have lost many good and noble man, I tell you it is a great sacrafice we are making too restore our once happy & united country & while we are sacraficing pleasure comfort & eaven offering our lives, our Northern friends are Quarreling and Quibbeling over political matters. I assure we soldiers most ardently desire Peace, but how is that Peace attainable? that is the question.

I see the President has called for 500,000 more men, if we only had the half of them in the field at the preasent time I think we could demoralize the preasent Reb Army. . . . I tell you they fight with great determination and will hold Atlanta as long as possible; I suppose our preasent position is not more than 3 miles west of Atlanta. I have not seen the city yet but several have.[38]

The health of the Regt is good considering the arduous duty we have been called upon to perform. Jacob Gibson is well, Wm is back at the Hospital[39] I have not seen him for some time. Gardner Armstrong[40] is quite sick or was a few days ago he was sent back to the Hospital I hope he soon be better. I tell you this is a hard place to be sick. . . .

if I should get woulded I will let you know of it immediately and if it should be my lot to fall I fall a Patriot, at least hope I am, I hope and pray that I may be spared to return to our peaceful and happy Home.

As Ever
H H. Orendorff

Near Atlanta Ga
Aug 12 1864

Dear Sister

. . . We are not on the front line at preasent the way we work it is we move up on a line throw up good works put out a skirmish line they dig pits then of nights we sent out fatigue parties & throw up heaveyer works whare our skirmishers are and put out Videttes still farther and when we get the works sufficiently strong move out a force that can hold them. by that means we keep working up to them Our skirmishers are not more than 200 yards apart, Our main works are probably 500 yards apart so you can see we are in pretty close proximity. . . .

We wer on skirmish or picket from eavening of 9th until eavening of 10th As we wer going out we had to pass several places whare the Reb sharp-shooters had range and one of my mess mates received a light wound on back of his neck. his name A J. Justice. Seargt Patterson[41] of Comp I was wounded the same eavening (in camp) through the thigh, (not dangerous). Night before last the Rebs gave us quite a shelling there was but one man hurt, he was struck by piece of shell on shoulder he belonged to 26th Ills, the 26th is in our Brigad now,[42] We have Regts in the Brig now viz 46th Ohio 40th, 26th & 103rd Ills & 97th & 100th Ind.

Brig Gen Walcott commands the Brigade. he was Col of 40th Ohio. Maj Willison is here but is not able to take command of the Regt We like Capt Post best any way. . . .

Orendorff H H.

Near Atlanta, Ga.
Aug 16th 1864

Mrs. C Parlin,

. . . Since writing the above we have been on picket or skirmish 24 hours, We had a very rough time as we had to go out and plant stakes in front of the works, which was rather close place as the Reb skirmishers were only 40 to 50 yards in front of us but as it happened none of us wer hurt while at work, but while we wer on picket line we had one man killed and two wounded Livingston of Co A was killed[43] Jeff Jacobus of "G" was wounded in head not dangerous[44] Capt Post was graised on side of neck by a minny ball. Paddy Eli Walling of Comp "C" was killed last night,[45] he was struck by a musket ball while he was laying in his bunk, he lived but a very few minutes after he was shot. I did not see him but it was said that he was struck near the right shoulder the ball passing through toward his left side. It is a painful duty to record the death of comrades but we know you all like to know the straight of casualties.[46] The health of the Regt is good. . . .

I dont know but John would get along better if he was at Home but I would rather remain at the Hospital if I was in his place until I got a Discharge I think he should have a discharge I would like one pretty well myself, but guess I will have to serve my term of enlistment out if I live.

I wish we could send Bro John his Descriptive Roll but it is impossible while we are on the Campaign as all the comp-books & papers are kept at Chattanooga with our Camp and Garrison equipage. . . .

We draw pretty good rations now pleanty of hard bread all the time and salt meet fresh beef mixed vegetables beans, sugar & coffee etc. We draw whiskey every few days and occasionally Dessicated Potatoes. . . .[47]

H H Orendorff

Near Atlanta, Ga.
Aug 21st 1864

Wm J Orendorff, Esq
Dear Brother,

. . . Our camp is on the 3rd line that is we have a heavey line in front of us and a heavey skirmish line We are on the skirmish line every fourth day tomorrow eavening will be our time to go out again. We are about as safe on skirmish line as we are in camp although it is more tiresome. . . .

Well, after Breakfast I went down to the spring took a good wash got our canteens full of water came back & put a mess of beans too cook So I had beans and coffee for dinner It is almost 2 OC P.M.

You must excuse my poor writing for my ink is so poor. I can hardly write besides I had a gigger. Just before Dinner We get about 2 giggers per 5 days I generally drink mine on this campaign for I think it very beneficial to a person that is as much exposed as we are, Wm you must not think there is any danger of my becoming addicted to the use of spirits I only use it when I think it beneficial.

I am glad Bro John is getting along so well I hope he will get a Discharge and go home, I will see that his Discriptive Roll is forwarded as soon as possible.

I would have thought that Capt Kelly, would have called on some of you when he was in Canton. To speak freely I dont go much on him as a man; he makes a pretty good Captain in some respects.

Wm, if I were in your place I would keep out of the Army I dont think this kind of life would suit you at all, You can pay your exemption or procure a substitute[48] I have no doubt.

Wm I suppose you will have a pretty hot time this fall During the Presidential Campaign I wish it was over I Cant say that I feel much interest in politics at the preasent time.

I give it as my opinion that those Rebbels will not give up as long as they can keep any thing of any Army togather I tell you they are holding us, about level here we have been within 3 miles of Atlanta for a month now & I dont know when we will get any closer. . . .

Yours very truly
H H Orendorff

John Don't send this home nor dont write home about my getting that scratch on the knee for it would only tend to make them uneasy. H H O

Near Atlanta Ga
Aug 23 1864

J W Orendorff, Esq.
Dear Brother

. . . I am truly sorry to think you are a cripple "for life" but such are the fortunes of "war" I hope you will soon be able to get around, I want you to go Home & make our good Parents & friends a good visit they would be so glad to see you & you would most certainly enjoy such a visit.

We still occupy the same position that we did at my last writing The "Army of the Tennessee" now form the center our Regt are on skirmish last night and to-day we are on the skirmish line every 4th day, I did not go out with the Company last night & I will tell you why as I was laying in bed asleep night before last a musket ball struck one of our shed poles glanced down and struck me on the right knee giving me quite a little bruise my legg is a little stiff from the affects of the bruise, the knee is a tender place to get a bruise. . . .

As Ever
H H Orendorff

Near Atlanta Ga
August 24th 1864

Wm J Orendorff, Esq
Dear Brother

. . . We still occupy the same position that we did at my last writing. We lay back and go on the front of skirmish line every fourth day, Our Regt came off the skirmish line last eavening, while they were out Comp K had one man killed by name of Bouman[49] he was killed while out in one of the front Pitts, We had a man wounded in our camp last night by name of Eskridge[50] he was a recuirt & joined us at Scottsboro last spring. Comp C allso had a man wounded last eavening by name of Cone,[51] they wer both flesh wounds in leg below the knee. The health of the Regt is good. Col Wright, Ordly Putnam[52] and others have returned Col does not look well at all. . . .

I see the Democrats are holding meetings & are crying Peace, for my part I would like to see Peace once more or spread our once glorious Union

Wm I dont feel much interest in Politics. . . .

H H Orendorff

East Point, Ga
Sept 9th 1864

Sister Maggie,

. . . Well our Campaign is over at last & we are about going in camp once more,

Our Army made a grand move when we went around and got possession of the Rail Roads I tell you it looked like a big risk but it gave us Atlanta & Hoods Old Corps a good thrashing at Jonesboro Ga The last fight wer in was at or near

Love joy Station on 2d inst. we charged in skirmish order took the enemy skirmish line and a few Prisoners[53] I am unable to say just how many. Capt Post was wounded not dangerous but serious, there 5, or 6, wounded in the Regt We had one man wounded in our comp by name of Joseph S Walters. John knows him. he had the end of his little finger shot off. . . .

I am well

My love to all
H H Orendorff

Notes

[1] Sherman is drawing his army together in preparation for the campaign aimed at Atlanta.

[2] From their staging position near Rossville, Tennessee, the 103rd moved south passing over the battlefield at Chickamauga, to Snake Creek Gap and into the action at Resaca on May 14. The regiment stayed in a supporting role; however, close enough to the fight to sustain a few casualties including Major Willison. *Reminiscences*, pp. 48-58.

[3] During the night of May 15, the Confederates evacuated their works and withdrew south. Sherman's army followed; the 103rd (15th Army Corps) proceeded to Adairsville and then to Kingston. *Ibid.* pp. 58-60.

[4] Sherman's Atlanta Campaign was complemented by a simultaneous offensive Grant directed at Richmond. *How the North Won*, p. 532.

[5] Big Shanty on June 7.

[6] The 2nd Brigade (103rd Illinois included), 15th Army Corps linked up with Wilder's Brigade to conduct a reconnaissance mission. *Reminiscences*, p. 75. Colonel John Wilder had successfully lobbied to have his brigade mounted and armed with Spencer repeaters. *The Civil War Dictionary*, p. 919.

[7] Major General Joseph Hooker.

[8] Among the letters which knowingly exist, there is a gap in correspondence between a May 19, 1864, letter written near Kingston and the next known letter dated June 11, 1864, written from Big Shanty. Orendorff glosses over the interim in this letter. Most of Sherman's army paused at Kingston to refit prior to renewing the drive toward Atlanta. From the beginning of the campaign, the Western and Atlantic Railroad was the axis of advance. Now, however, with the Confederates strongly fortifying the Alatoona Mountain ranges, Sherman left the railroad line of operation, marched south toward Dallas and thus attempted to bypass or turn the Rebel strongpoint. William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of W. T. Sherman* (2 vols., New York, 1875), Vol II, 42. On May 23 the 103rd Infantry moved south with a hard twenty-one mile march. Continuing on, it passed through Dallas on May 26. The following day four companies (not including Orendorff's unit) were deployed as brigade skirmishers and immediately got into the action suffering several casualties and capturing twenty-one Rebels. During the next several days, the regiment was subjected to heavy cannonading including a sustained Confederate attack in which Colonel Dickerman was mortally wounded - he died on May 30. Casualties, although not in great numbers, were becoming a frequent and mounting occurrence. On June 1, the 103rd, with its brigade, shifted several miles to the east as Sherman's army began moving back toward the railroad; Orendorff's regiment arrived near Big Shanty, June 10th. *Reminiscences*, pp. 61-76.

[9] An examination of Fulton County sources does not reveal a P. M. Bidamon. The

postmaster's name was Christian Bidamon and perhaps that explains the comment "refuses to send." *History of Fulton County* (Chapman), p. 542.

[10] What began as an intended demonstration against the Confederate left evolved into an offensive thrust that overran the enemy position and then captured more than 500 prisoners. Once initiated, the demonstration simply gained momentum as Rebels showed less than expected resistance and screaming Yankees ran through pickets, plunged across the Noonday Creek, and charged up a hill to overwhelm the defender. Henry H. Wright, *A History of the Sixth Iowa Infantry* (Iowa City, 1923), pp. 284-85 and *Reminiscences*, pp. 80-81.

[11] Private James Goldsmith, Bernadotte; Private Samuel Spencer, Banner; and Corporal William Ashton, Lewistown.

[12] Remarkably, both First Sergeant David Snyder and Private Lawrence survived.

[13] Major Charles Willis in his diary recorded: "This has been a star day, and a better feeling lot of men that compose our Brig. will be hard to find. . . ." *Reminiscences*, p. 80.

[14] The control of Kennesaw Mountain gave the Confederates a formidable defensive position intercepting the railroad and an exceptional view of Sherman's activity. Jacob D. Cox, *Atlanta*, (New York, 1882), p. 64.

[15] Having reinlisted sufficient numbers, the 55th Illinois earned designation as a veteran regiment and those who extended their military service qualified for a thirty-day furlough; they returned to active duty on June 19, 1864. Frederick H. Dyer (ed.), *A Compedium of the War of the Rebellion* (3 Vols., New York, 1959), Vol. III, 1071. Companies A and D hailed principally from Fulton County. *Adjutant General's Report*, Vol. III, 687-90 and 94-96.

[16] Captain Jacob Augustine from Canton, an officer in Company A. *Ibid*, pp. 687-88.

[17] Along with *Harper's Weekly*, Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper* was one of the most popular periodicals of its kind. Employing a staff throughout the country, these field artists sketched military scenes and engagements. Their works were reproduced as engravings. Frederic E. Ray, *Alfred R. Waud: Civil War Artist* (New York, 1974), pp. 27-28.

[18] Colonel Willard Dickerman.

[19] Regretably, that letter is missing from the Henry Orendorff collection. Henry's division, the 4th of the 15th Army Corps along with one other division, drew a nearly impossible assignment of storming a portion of Kennesaw Mountain. Their approach was obstructed by an intense growth of tangled trees, bushes, and vines and despite being fired upon, the attackers were unable to locate the precise position of the enemy for some time. The assault forces succeeded in over-running and killing a sizeable number of Confederate pickets, but in their advance toward the Rebel's main line, heavy casualties mounted and the offensive momentum worc down. An order to retire extracated most of the living Union troops from a very bad situation. *Reminiscences*, pp. 87-90. Major Wills's anticipated confidence in the order to assault the mountain was tersely expressed the evening before: "good-bye, vain world." *Ibid*, p. 88.

[20] This attack claimed a brutal toll of seventeen killed and forty wounded in the regiment. *Ibid*, p. 91.

[21] Among the twelve regimental officers involved in the fight, three were killed and four others wounded. The destruction of leadership forced Colonel Wright, who was assigned to division staff, to assume command. A severe wound in the leg precipitated his discharge. *Adjutant General's Report*, Vol. 5, 638 and *Reminiscences*, p. 88. Brigade commander Brigadier General Charles Walcutt reported that Wright's "bravery was conspicu-

ous." *OR*, Vol. 38, Pt. 3, 318.

[22] Captain Jacob Augustine, 55th Illinois Infantry, was killed in action during the assault on June 27. *Adjutant General's Report*, Vol. 3, 687.

[23] Corporal George Moss, Company F, Cuba; First Lieutenant Nathanial Montgomery, Company I, Ipava; Private Jacob Maxwell, Company G, Canton; and Sergeant Francis Putnam, Company H, Lewistown.

[24] With the elevation of Grant to commander of all the Union forces and the adoption of a military strategy of simultaneous pressure on all fronts as an objective of destroying the Confederate army, the nature of the Civil War drastically changed. Earlier, there were typically long periods of inactivity between occasional engagements when an army rested up for a new fight. Here, Henry Orendorff and his comrades were engaged in a campaign in which the combat never ended; just one battle followed by another. If you were lucky enough to live, the pressure eventually wore on your mind. "This campaign is coming down to a question of muscle and nerve. It is the 62d day for us, over 50 of which we have passed under fire. I don't know anything more exhausting." *Reminiscences*, p. 92.

[25] Unable to drive the Confederates from their stronghold at Kennesaw Mountain, Sherman employed his often repeated strategy of flanking his opponent. The turning movement succeeded and Johnston responded in predictable fashion by evacuating his works and falling back to assume a new line at the Chattahoochie River. Sherman pursued, and on July 9, Johnston withdrew his army south of the river. Atlanta was ten tough miles away. The 103rd had been positioned on the right flank, but were shifted to the left as they marched east in preparation to cross the river; that was achieved on July 14. Cox, *Atlanta*, pp. 131-144; *Adjutant General's Report*, Vol. 5, 638; and *Reminiscences*, pp. 93-100.

[26] July 7, Union cavalry occupied Roswell, just north of the Chattahoochie, and destroyed several mills which were manufacturing supplies for the Confederate army. Cox, *Atlanta*, p. 137. The 103rd crossed the river at Roswell.

[27] Augusta Railroad. Orendorff's unit reached Decatur on July 19, six miles east of Atlanta. *Reminiscences*, p. 105.

[28] Having been steadily pushed back into the Atlanta environs, the Confederate high command decided to make a change in leadership; on July 17 Johnston was replaced by the very combative and aggressive John Bell Hood. Cox, *Atlanta*, pp. 145-49. Three days later he pounced on an isolated portion of General George Thomas's army at Peachtree Creek and followed up with a hard strike at the Army of the Tennessee as it was marching toward Atlanta. The fighting was desperate as Union forces were attacked on all sides. Amidst near crises and the need to react to yet another threat, commander James B. McPherson was killed. *Ibid*, pp. 164-74. "During the battle, our Regt. changed position three times, facing E., W. and S. We repulsed 4 charges, took 115 prisoners, and helped take 400 more. . . . I cannot for my life see how we escaped so well." *Reminiscences*, p. 107.

[29] Orendorff accurately assessed his regiment's losses. In addition to Charles Buck, First Lieutenant Lawrence Blair, Fairview, and Private John Smith, Canton, were killed in the battle. *Ibid*, pp. 105, 269 and 276. In another brief note bearing no date, Henry provides some additional observations on the Battle of Atlanta. "I tell you we had a hot time it was a hard fight, but I think the Rebs must have lost 3 or 4 to our one, they captured a goodeal of our artillary but we recaptured a goodeal of it. I am well but pretty worn out. Our Regt is credited with taking 8 prisoners. Our Regt done nobely."

[30] Private William Smith from Farmington.

[31] The descriptive roll was an official army document which contained personal mili-

tary data; it was a soldier's or officer's personal record. Kenneth W. Munden and Henry P. Beers, *Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War* (Washington, 1962), pp. 404-05.

[32] Intending to sever yet another line of Confederate communication, Sherman ordered the Army of the Tennessee (General O. O. Howard succeeded to command on July 25 following McPherson's death) to move rapidly all the way around to the right flank and operate against the Montgomery and Atlanta Railroad extending below the beseiged city. About noon on July 28, two of Hood's Corps countered Howard's move and aggressively attacked the 15th Army corps; charge followed charge. Corps commander John A. Logan credited Orendorff's division with some of the worst pressure yet stiffest resistance. This action would later be known as the Battle of Ezra Church. *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, Vol. 2, 87-90. "It was the toughest fight of the campaign" claimed Major Wills, "but not a foot of our line gave way, and our loss is not 1/20 of theirs. The rails saved us. I am tired of seeing such butchery, but if they will charge us that way once a week, this Corps will end the war in this section." *Reminiscences*, p. 109.

[33] Private Pierce Rich from Vermont.

[34] Private John Wise and First Lieutenant Jared Voorhees of Farmers. Plaudits for the 103rd Illinois came from several quarters including a grateful 70th Ohio Infantry. That regiment was engaged in a desperate fight and at a critical moment, the 103rd Illinois and 46th Ohio arrived to plug a gap in the Union line. "The alacrity and gallantry displayed by the officers and men of the One hundred and third Illinois and Forty-sixth Ohio in relieving our exhausted ranks will endear those regiments to us as long as memory exists." *OR*, Vol. 38, Pt. 3, 359.

[35] Sherman reported that Hood suffered losses of 4,632 while by comparison he lost only 700 men. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (4 Vols., New York, 1959), Vol. 4, 254.

[36] Private Marcus Jacox, Canton; Private George Call, Lewistown; Private William Bolen, Fulton County; and Sergeant Russell Tanner, Farmington. Tanner died from his wounds on August 21, 1864. *Adjutant General's Report*, Vol. 5, 634, 619, 630, and 621.

[37] As Orendorff related, the opposing lines were close. Several detachments seized a Rebel picket line and a mini-engagement was fought over this advantage. Company K represented the 103rd and Private John Durham of Canton was a casualty. *Reminiscences*, pp. 110-11 and 282.

[38] Soldiers and officers saw the prize by climbing tall trees. *Ibid*, p. 93.

[39] Corporal Jacob Gibson, Canton, a member of Company K. William is William Gibson.

[40] Private Gardner Armstrong, Company C from Canton.

[41] Sergeant Joel Patterson hailed from Cass.

[42] "The 100th Indiana and 26th Illinois regiments were transferred from the First to the Second Brigade, and thus the entire Third Brigade transferred to the First, thus consolidating the division into two brigades." *A History of the Sixth Iowa Infantry*, p. 313.

[43] Private William Livingston, Lewistown, was killed August 15.

[44] Probably Private Thomas J. Jacobus from Farmington.

[45] Eli Walling of Farmington. Apparently an error in the *Adjutant General's Report* for he is listed as KIA, October 15, 1864. *Ibid*, p. 622.

[46] Soldiers' letters and local newspapers were the two principal sources of information on battle casualties. Henry is expressing a commonly recognized opinion that newspapers were frequently inaccurate.

[47] Whiskey was issued through the Commissary Department apparently for its "medicinal" value. *Soldier's Life in the Union and Confederate Armies*, pp. 92-93.

[48] Henry is referring to the Enrollment Act passed in March, 1863, which allowed eligible draftees to avoid conscription by hiring a substitute or paying a commutation fee of $300. Fred A. Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army* (2 Vols., Gloucester, 1965), Vol. 1, 306.

[49] Private Hamilton Baughman of Buckhart.

[50] Private James Eskeridge, Lewistown.

[51] Private Joseph Cone from Farmington.

[52] Corporal Hazel Putnam of Fulton County.

[53] Leaving the 20th Corps to protect his Chattahoochie River crossings, Sherman set the rest of his army in motion on August 25, swinging around below Atlanta aimed at destroying the remaining railroads. After reaching the Macon Railroad, positions were prepared and the destruction of the road commenced. On August 31, Lieutenant General William Hardee attacked the 15th Corps, but the 103rd Illinois Infantry was not engaged. Failing in his attempt to dislodge the Union forces, Hardee retreated south to Lovejoy's Station. On September 1, Hood withdrew his remaining forces from Atlanta and joined Hardee. Portions of Sherman's army immediately entered Atlanta. The two armies clashed again the following day. As Orendorff describes, the 103rd's action was limited to a brush with enemy pickets. *Memoirs of W. T. Sherman*, Vol. 2, 104-10; *Atlanta*, pp. 196-209 and *OR*, Vol. 38, Pt. III, 327-28.

6
Good To Get In Camp Once More

East Point, Ga
Sept 12th 1864

Miss Maggie Orendorff,
Dear Sister,

We moved camp yasterday & did not get fixed up until we learned that we would have to move again, at 3½ O C PM, yasterday I was detailed for Picket and am still on picket expect to be relieved this eavening, we have a verry nice place out here to picket I like it much better than picketing within fingerstone throw of the enemy. . . .

I was so little surprised to hear that S N Rockhold was at home I must say that I dont much approve of those French Leaves,[1] but every one too their own notion I dont think them very honorable. I saw Jesie Hoag when we were down below Jonesboro he was looking very well & seemed very glad to see me he looks much more like a man than he did when he enlisted. . . .

I suppose that you have heard that Wm Lowe was wounded on 31 of Aug at Jonesboro I have not seen him but am told that his wound is not dangerous. I tell you we have run a good many gauntletts this campaign We have had men shot all around us, On 28th of July Major of 70th Ohio kept walking up and down his lines & encouraging his men the balls flew thick & fast but none of them hit him, he was talking with some of us after the fight was over, he said he had no bravery to spare, but believed in an over ruling power, & whare duty called him there he was going to go & lead his men A Noble man was he, I understand he was afterward killed while leading his men in a charge on the enemy skirmish line,[2] I tell you it looks like a pitty to be obligated to sacrafice such noble Patriotic Christians. . . .

Orendorff

East Point, Ga
Sept 12th 1864

Wm,

. . . I suppose you have seen an account of the gallant style in which we (the Army of the Tennessee) with drew from front the enemy on 26th of August & made a rapid march to the rear of Hoods Army and cut both R Rs, The position that we evacuated was so close to the enemy that we could & did throw small stones & clods from our skirmish Pitts into enemy's & got a similar answer, our Brigade was in the rear of the Corps & our Regt was in the rear of the Brigade

& covered the whole thing We wer deployed in regular skirmish order along the whole line of the Brigade & remained an hour & a half or two hours after all of the rest of the troops had withdrawn, I tell you it was rather a scary position but we came out all right and in the course of time came up to the rest of the troops on Sunday night 29th[3] We worked a while at tearing up and burning the Montgomery R R & on 30th made a forced march & gained a good position close to the Macon R R at Jonesboro throwed up works & had every thing ready for the Rebs when they charged on 31st & wer repulsed with heavey loss, Our Division done but little fighting on 31st but the 2d Division more than salivated the Jonneys on the night of 1st Sept the Jonney evacuated their position at Jonesboro, on 2d we followed them 5 miles & had some pretty sharp skirmish fighting, & best of all this last grand move of Shermans gave us Atlanta & Hood was completely out generaled. I suppose Old John Morgan and his desperate band has been destroyed.[4]

On the last campaign we were in ten fights 3 of which were charges. I feel very thankful that I have escaped so well. . . .

Orendorff of 103rd Ills

East Point, Ga
Sept 15th 1864

Wm J Orendorff, Esq.
Dear Brother

. . . We have been all around Atlanta & have fought on all sides of the Citty but have not had the pleasure of visiting the Citty yet. I want to get a pass & get to Atlanta as soon as I can I have quite an ankiety to walk the streets of the great "Central Citty" of the Confederacy.

We have passed through a long and tedious campaign since the 1st of May we have marched 400 miles & the "Army of the Tennessee" have been in 13 engagements & have repulsed the enemy in every assault they have made on us.[5]

Maj Gen O O. Howard has issued quite Congratulator order which was read to us last eavening & Maj Gen Logan has done the same.

Saml Rockhold arrived here yesterday he is looking fine & is feeling ditto. The wound I received in front of Atlanta was very trifling almost too trifling to mention Noth withstanding it laid me up for a few days & excused me from one tour of Picket-skirmish.

I tell you it seems good to get into camp once more where the infernal Reb bullets cease to whistle over us. . . .

So Good Night,

Sept 15th 2 OC PM

I went and done my washing this morning and afterward I coppied Maj Gen John A Logans orders and will send it home soon I would send it in this but some of the boys want to get a copy of it. . . .

Jeff Everly has not changed much allthough he does not say much he is one of my best friends & is allways ready to doe any thing for me. He makes a splendid bunk mate. . . .

H H Orendorff

East Point Ga
Sept 20th 1864

J W Orendorff, Esq.
Dear Brother

. . . We had to move camp again yasterday Our 4th Division has been broken up, & our Brigaid are transferred to the 1st Division (Osterhaus) 15th A C I dont know how we will like him yet, One objection is his old command were allmost all Dutch & you know what they are, the very meanest soldiers in the field but we will only have 11 months to stay with them.[6]

We signed the pay-Rolls yasterday & the prospect is we will be paid soon 6 or 8 months pay.

Our Company papers & traps have not yet been received from Chatinooga but we look for them soon,

John Wise is to get a furlough in a few days and if I can I will send your Discriptive Roll by him.

Our preasent camping ground is splendid it is in an old field that has not been cultivated for some time and is nise and rolling but we havent as good water here as we had in our other camp. John it seems good to get in camp once more but I am sorry to say our rations are very slim, I dont think we get more than half rations but so it is maybe we will fare better now that we are in another Division at least we all hope so, You know we allways hope for the best. . . .

I wouldnt wonder much but that we would have a hard campaign this fall allthough theres no telling but if Mobile should fall I look for an expedition to move in conjunction with us if such should be the case Hood will get in close quarters. I have so often been deceived in regard to millitary movements that at times I have come to the conclusion that I would never speculate again.

Our boys are in good health and would be in good spirits if they had plenty of rations.

Wm Gibson is at the Regimental Hospital he is not overly stout. Rockhold looks well since his return to the Regt. We have not heard from Capt Kelly for some time, J F. Forhees is in command of the compy He received his commission and was mustered while we were before Atlanta. . . .[7]

John I suppose you will get to stay home some time yet, You must try and enjoy yourself as well as possible and tell our good father and mother no to worry about me. . . .

As ever
Orendorff, H H

East Point Ga
Sept 23 1864

Mr. John Orendorff
Dear Father,

I avail myself the opportunity of writing you a few lines to send by John Wise as he has a furlough and intends to start home this afternoon. You will in all probability see him before he returns to the Regt. My health is good at the preasent, infact it is about as good as it has been since I came into the Army. The health of the Regt is good very good. I was over to the 55th this morning saw Wm Lowe he is getting along fine his wound is doing very well, he looks fine.

I will send a couple of orders in this one of John A. Logans and one of Brig Gen Wm Harrows, our Division Commander during the last campaign. We regret to have him leave us.[8]

John's Discriptive Roll was forwarded to him by mail yasterday he will in all probability get it before you receive this. . . .

Your true son,
H H Orendorff

East Point Ga
Sept 24th 1864

Wm J Orendorff, Esq
Dear Brother

. . . Wm I sold my Watch to-day and am to get the pay for it as soon as we get paid. I wish you would get me a good Silver Hunters Case Watch and send it to me by J. Wise when he returns to the regiment Worth $40.00; or; $45.00, Chas Cavalin[9] had some American Lever Watches last winter when I was home, that he sold at $37. Dollars that would suit me very well. I believe they are better Watches than can be had for that money now.

I am trying to write by candle light and the wind blows so that I can hardly make it. Every thing is quiet in camp We were on Battalion Drill to-day, had a pretty good time Col. Wright Drilled us. I tell you it is more pleasant than fighting. . . .

H H Orendorff

East Point Ga
Sept 28th 1864

Wm J Orendorff Esq
Canton Illinois

Dear Brother

. . . I am truly glad to hear that John is getting along well, I hope he may soon get able to walk, but I don't want him to come back to the regiment any more, not but that I would enjoy his company but I never want a Brother in the same regiment with me, there was Charley Buck when he was shot he fell against his Brother, oh! what a pang it must have been to his Brother[10]

. . . I suppose Ordly Snyder will be fit for Duty by the time he wants to return I tell you he got very sick of the service before he was wounded and wanted out of it bad.

One of our boys has returned to the Company that was at Quincy Ills. when the draft went-off.

We are to have grand review this afternoon and some of the boys think it indicates a move, for my part I dont think we can advance much farther on this line of rail road, it is allready so long it is impossible to guard it so they cannot cut it.

Wm, I don't think there is much show for us to get home this fall allthough strange things take place, They are giving 5 per cent furloughs to this army (of the Tennessee) besides some sick furloughs, so there will be some of the boys get to go home that have not been yet. Jeff Everly gets a furlough and he deserves it he is a good faithful soldier and is allways at his post, he is considerable a McLellan man though he is not to blame for that. . . .

H H Orendorff

Little River Ala
Oct 22nd 1864

Mr John Orendorff,
Dear Father

. . . The reason I have not written is that we have been on the move, we left East Point the 4th of this month went to Marietta via Vinings from there to Kennesaw Mountain & laid over Sunday (9th) on which day I went out foraging got quite a variety viz Sweet Potatoes Peaches Percimmons Water Melons etc etc. From Kennesaw we moved to within 4 miles of Rome via Kingston, from Rome we went as far north as Taylors Ridge via Calhoun & Rasaca from there we came out here via Lafayette Summerville & Gayesville. in our windings we have marched near 200 miles since we left East Point,[11] I have stood the march finely Since we left Rome we have passed through a rich productive country & have lived on potatoes both sweet and Irish corn meal flower sorghum molasses Apples both green & fried Pumpkins Honey etc. We allso have plenty of fresh Pork & Beef in fact we have about all the good things that we want. I am getting fat I was out foraging to-day I got both Sweet and Irish potatoes, & New Orleans Molasses.

Part of our corps had a fight or rather a skirmish with Hoods rear guard near Taylors Ridge & the 17th corps Skirmished some with the enemy at the lower end

of Snake Creek gap or pass. . . .

I think from the general appearance of things that we are going to have quite a spirited campaign this fall but I hope Hood will keep out of our way so that we won't have to fight him much. It is hard telling where Old Billy is going to make the next Strike. We are about 20 miles from Scottsboro & about 30 miles from Rome, Ga. . . .

I dont know but that I will send this letter by Wellington[12] of 55th as I understand they are to start Home to-day or to-morrow.

H H Orendorff

Little River Ala
Oct 28th 1864

Wm H Parlin Esq.
Dear Nephew

. . . On Monday afternoon last we started out on a three days scout (or reconoicence in force) the first afternoon we marched about 8 miles camped for the night Started the next morning at 5 OC AM, marched about 8 miles when we advance commenced skirmishing with the Reb cavalry we drove them and kept driving them for about 4 miles I was on the skirmish line when we drove them from their last stand Point, they shelled us a while and we shelled them a while & then we flanked them and made them run like white heads. It was the best view that I ever had of Reb cavalry they were about 2 regts strong we had a regt of cavalry & part of two Divisions of Infantry.

After we routed the Jonneys we came back about 4 miles for the night

I with some others went out foraging (this was after night) we went to a house went in and got a good dose of Butter milk & Some Dried fruit went on a little farther to another house went in and asked him if he had any Honey, he said he had one stand of bees we told him to get a light and go and show us whare it was he done so and we went down on it & got a good dose of honey. next we found a barrel of molasses we allso took a dip of Molasses we havent been out of Molasses since we came to Taylors Ridge. . . .

H H Orendorff

Near Vinings Station Ga
Nov 6th 1864

John W. Orendorff Esq
Dear Brother

. . . We have made considerable of a campaign in the last month I suppose we have marched about 300 miles in all, I have Stood the march finely. I am much more fleshy than I was when we left East Point, We have been in good foraging

country the most of the time. . . . I dont mind a Campaign in the fall when forage is plenty & the rebels are at a good distance. I dont think we will stop here but a very short time perhaps 2 or 3 days The most of our officers & soldiers think we will go to Savannah, Ga. It seems as though Old Uncle Billey is agoing to put us through he wants to get the good of the 600,000 call that he came out under.[13]

Well, payday has come at last, we were paid last night after dark, I drew (124.00) One hundred and Twenty four Dollars, I propose sending $100 by Capt Augustine as he is agoing to go home from this place.

We held an election in the Regt yasterday the Regt gave Lincoln 59 majority, Our election was merely a test. Our Comp gave McClellan 8 majority 21 voted for McClellan & Pendleton and 13 for Lincoln and Johnson. . . .[14]

H H. Orendorff

Vinings Station
Nov 10th 1864

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

. . . I dont think we are agoing to have much fighting to do from all indications though it is hard telling what we will doe for Sherman dont know the word Cant Whare there is no road he can make one and if he wants to cross a River he goes to work and makes Pontoons and after crossing they are easy destroyed. . . .

H H Orendorff

Notes

[1] A common expression for an unauthorized leave similar to being AWOL in more contemporary terms.

[2] On August 3, Major William Brown died leading a brigade detachment in an attack upon a Confederate skirmish line. In his last moments, Major Brown reportedly said: "Boys, take the works, and tell the general I died at my post, doing my duty." *OR*, Vol. 38, Pt. 3, 345.

[3] Orendorff provides an excellent account of a very tricky military maneuver; withdrawing the main body of the army while disguising its departure with a thin veil of skirmishers. Regimental officers were just as tense as the ranks as Major Wills attests: ". . . I give you my word, this covering an evacuation is a delicate, dangerous, and far from pleasant duty." *Reminiscences*, p. 115.

[4] Legendary Confederate cavalry leader John Hunt Morgan was killed in Tennessee on September 3, 1864. Ezra Warner, *Generals in Gray* (Baton Rouge, 1975), p. 221.

[5] After completing a long and arduous campaign, it was natural to reflect on contributions and sacrifices. The regiment participated in a sustained engagement of four months and six days and experienced 176 casualties; 37 killed, 130 wounded and 9 missing. *OR*, Vol. 38, Pt. 3, 328.

[6] In part, the reorganization reflected shrinking numbers within each regiment. Earlier

in the war, a brigade was typically composed of four regiments. With this change, the 103rd joined six other regiments to comprise the Second Brigade, First Division, Fifteenth Army Corps. *OR*, Vol. 39, Pt. 2, 554. Major General Peter Osterhaus was born in Germany, immigrated to the United States in 1849, and experienced a distinguished carecr during the Civil War. *Generals in Blue*, pp. 352-53. Undoubtedly the "Dutch" Henry refers to were Deutsch or Germans.

[7] Jared Voorhees rose quickly in rank; beginning as a sergeant he was promoted to first lieutenant June 27, 1864, and captain, October 13, 1864. *Adjutant General's Report*, Vol. 5, 626.

[8] Perhaps typical of human nature, Civil War soldiers were wary of strangers and prejudiced against foreigners and, as western troops, against eastern soldiers and officers. If Orendorff accurately reflected popular sentiment, the regiment had changed its opinion of Brigadier General William Harrow. Harrow had received a cool reception in late 1863. *Reminiscences*, pp. 33, 46, and 49-50.

[9] A Canton merchant, Chas. Cavallin's store was next to Keefer's Drug Store on the square. *Fulton County Ledger*, February 11, 1862, p. 4.

[10] There were two Joseph Bucks in Company F.

[11] In late September, General Hood became active again moving north across the Chattahoochee River obviously bent on forcing Sherman to follow by striking at the Federal's railroad. The 20th Corps was left to hold Atlanta and the river crossings while the rest of Sherman's army fell back to deal with Hood. *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, Vol. 2, 144-45.

[12] Private Horatio Wellington of Canton. He apparently was one of the non-veterans who mustered out October 31, 1864. *Adjutant General's Report*, Vol. 3, 689.

[13] By this time, Sherman's army had repaired the railroads and communication lines destroyed by Hood and boldly decided to turn his back on an aggressive adversary; Hood would be Brigadier General George H. Thomas's problem. With the weak sent to the rear and all extras removed, Sherman had readied his army for the grand march to the sea. *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, Vol. 2, 167.

[14] The candidates were Republicans Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson and Democrats George McClellan and George Pendleton. Henry is reporting the results of a straw vote as Illinois law did not permit soldiers in the field to vote. Josiah Benton, *Voting in the Field* (Boston, 1915), p. 265.

7

Gen Sherman Is Going To Make Good Use Of Us

Owens Plantation Ga
Dec 14th 1864

Wm J Orendorff, Esq
Dear Brother

. . . I last wrote you from Vinings St. Ga. Since that we have marched through the Confederacy and yasterday our fleet & 2d Div 2d of our corps took Ft McAllister which is at the mouth of the Ogeeche River about 7 miles from this point.

On 22nd of last month we (our Brigaid) had quite a hard fight near Griswoldville (which is near Dalton) in which our loss was about 80 in the Brigaid. Our Regt had 4 killed on the field and two mortally wounded one of them was N S. Breed of Co "G" Nate was shot through the right lung he lived about 15 days I guess.

We have but very short time to write, I merely write to let you know that I am well.

Wm Gibson S N Rockhold are well The general health of the Regt is good, the boys as a general thing have stood the marching well, Wm Penney Died about the 26th of last month, he took pains in his side and kept growing worse until he died,[1]

At present we are settled down on a little patch of timber between Rice Plantations.

I believe our men took 17 large guns & several field pieces in Ft McAllister, & 150 Prisoners they just had men enough in the Ft to man there guns. . . .[2]

I will enclose my letter in a Captured Envelope.

H H. Orendorff

Owens Plantation Ga
Dec 16th 1864

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister,

. . . Well we left Atlanta, Dixie bound on 15th of last month, marched at the rate of 15 miles pr day[3] until we struck the rail road between Macon & Milledgeville on eavening of 21st Nov on the morning of 22d Our Brig moved out towards Macon reconoitering, we soon encountered the Reb cavalry and had pretty lively skirmishing and drove them with our skirmish line about two miles

& through Griswoldville We then withdrew our skirmish line and formed a line of battle back about a mile from Grisoldville, got dinner, made some molasses candy etc etc. About 2 OC PM the Reb Infantry came up and attacked our pickets upon hearing the firing we went to work to build some works out of old logs chunks railes etc in fact we used everything that would check a ball, pretty soon the Rebs drove our pickets in, and on they came in double column but we made it too hot for them and they wavered and then came a third column but we checked them then came a fourth column and they too wavered & had to give it up, they brought against our little Brigaid (number scarcely 1400) three Brigaides and two Regts of State line troops;[4] Our loss in the Brigaid was about 80 killed and wounded[5] the Reb papers put their loss at 614 Six hundred and fourteen. Among the killed in our Regt was Lew Anderson of Co "D" Calep Moor of Co "D" was mortily wounded, and Nathan S Breed of CO. "C", I would give more of the particulars concerning Nathan but Tim Sterns waited on him and he told me that he had written to his folks,[6] I am truly sorry to record the death of a good and brave comrade but such is the fortunes of this wicked rebellion Many a true, brave and patriotic soldier has given his life a sacrifice.

After the fight of the 22d we moved on at the rate of about 10 miles pr day, and have had no more fighting up to this time, Night before last and yasterday we were out to support the 12th Wis Battery in the mean time they shelled us pretty keen. We are right down among the Rice plantations. We are 9 miles from Savannah I think we are in a south west direction from Savanah, & about 8 miles from Ft McAllister,

I dont know what to write that will interest you, The most of our comrades are well, Sargt David Maxwell is very poorly I think his recovery is somewhat doubtful; CV Haskins is quite unwell, they both belong to Comp "F".[7]

It seems like a long time since I had any mail but I think we will get mail very soon perhaps to-morrow or the next day.

The weather is very warm so warm that it seems good to get in the shad in the middle of the day. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Savannah, Dec 25th 1864

Maggie Orendorff
Kind Sister

. . . I will drop you a line; And in the 1st place I wish you a merry Christmas.[8] Last Christmas I was with you and was having good times. how differently I am situated now, Although my situation is quite different I am enjoying myself as well as a soldier can in a captured Citty. I truly hope you are enjoying yourself to-day, We are doing Provost duty in the lower end of the citty (or Island) We have all kinds of people to Deal with, White Black Irish Dutch French English etc How long we will remain here it is hard to tell, I would like to stay about

8 months. We are in camp on Green Sqr. by the way I dont call it very green, I would call it sandy sqr if I had the naming of it. Since writing the above I have had a call from Chaplin Millsaps of 86th Ill Vols. he is looking fine and is in good spirits he didnt stop long. I would like to have a good long chat with him.

I tell you we have had a good time on this last Campaign, A good deal of the time we had a surplus of rations, I never ate so many sweet Potatoes in my life and fresh Pork was very plenty,[9] and chickens and sweet Potatoes cooked togather are pretty good. Millsaps said he lived fat.

It is afternight and I am writing by candlelight. I would give allmost anything to be at home go to church with you this eavening but as it is we must be content. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Savannah Ga
Jan 8th 1865

Wm J Orendorff,
Dear Brother

I am seated for the purpose of writing you a few lines. We had review yasterday We were reviewed by Maj General W T. Sherman, accompanied by Maj Gen Howard, Logan, Osterhaus, and several Brigadiers. . . .

The boys are generally well, Mr. DeClark of Comp "E" is sick[10] I think they say that he has a fever.

I am on duty to-day but as good luck will have it I am Supenumary and will perhaps will have no duty to-day. We are still doing Provost duty but there are rumors of marching Orders, I would like to stay here the balance of out time but fear we will not. . . .

We count our time by months now instead of years. . . .

I dont go much on these Savannah Ladies nor the Negro galls either, Some of the Slaves are whiter than I am,

As ever Write Often
H H. Orendorff

Near Beaufort S C
Jan 14 1865

Wm J Orendorff Esq.

. . . We left Savannah on the morning of the 10th inst and marched out to Fort Thunderbelt a distance of 5 or 6 miles and laid there until the afternoon of 12th when we took a transport and morning of the 13th found us at Beaufort we had a very pleasant time coming around the sea being very calm. I have had one ride on the big water (if it was short)

Well everything indicates that we have actually started on another campaign where we will go or how long our campaign will be we have no means of tellin.[11] we all think we are a going to Charleston. We may not have a chance to write very often. . . .

I think a few more grand campaignes will certainly play rebellion out. I guess Gen Sherman is going to make good use of us while he can,

The weather is rather disagreeable cool and windy. The boys are generally well. My health is good.

Wm I am anticipating good times if I live to get out of the service. we dont have a great while to serve any more, we only have 7 or 8 months at most that dont seem very long. . . .

H H. Orendorff

Beaufort S C
Jan 22 1865

Wm J Orendorff
Dear Brother

. . . War news is favorable as far as we are posted, I [think] there is a pretty good sight for the war to come to a close in the course of one or two years, I tell you I am no hundred days man, nor six months man either, We may capture every city of importance in the South but as long as the Rebbels have an Organized Army the war will and is bound to continue, When we once subdue their Armies then the war will close and not til then So much for my feable judgement. I wish I could think of something interesting to write. I must tell you how we got flooded the other night, We were camped on a low piece of ground it rained all day the ground got full of water toward evening it commenced to rain harder there was no water in our shanty at dark so we maid our bed and laid down, we had not been in bed long until the water commenced running under us, and the tide continued to rise, I got up put my boots on and got a small board and placed under me whare my pants allways wear out first, placed my knapsack under my shoulders socked my heels on the ground in this position I took a good knap; I am telling you this so you will know how to work the machine if you ever go soldiering. I hope you will never try it, by the way I wouldnt mind it much to soldier for 12 months but three 12 yet it a most too much. I wrote you a letter not long since in which I put a private note, I have no objections to you showing said note to any of our folks but dont give me the title until I get my commission,[12] Wm I think I can and will sell my watch after awhile although I like it very well, it keeps good time. . . .

Your true Brother
H H Orendorff

Goldsboro "N C"
March 25 1865

Wm J Orendorff Esq.
Dear Brother

I am well and in the best of Spirits.

We have had a long & hard Campaign but little fighting. We had a little fight at Congaree Creek near Columbus "S C" on 15th of last mo[13] I was slightly wounded in the above mentioned fight, in the right thigh by a piece of Shell it only laid me up 18 or 20 days. We had some fighting on the 20th 21st of this month near Benton Ville "N C", We had several boys wounded among the number was Adjt F B. Lermond in arm, Seargt R Evans "Co A" in leg flesh wound, Seargt Jessie Hinderliter Co "H" in leg or thigh severe.[14] Isaac Ellis in hand & arm Co "C" severe.

I might mention some others that were wounded but for the want of time will have to defer, Rockhold Gibson and Everly are all right

We have had no mail yet.

As ever
H H Orendorff

Goldsboro "N C"
March 27 1865

Maggie Orendorff

. . . Our last grand campaign has been one of great exertion, we marched a distance of nearly 500 miles & lived principally off the country. Many family is no doubt suffering for the necessaries of life I might say hundreds of families, it looks hard to devastate a country as we have a large portion of the Carolinas;[15] but on the other hand it is hard for us to leave our friends & Families We have done but little fighting on the last campaign. We had a skirmish near Columbia in which I was slightly wounded in thigh by a piece of shell. We allso had a skirmish at Benton Ville "N C", on 21st & 22nd of this month. You will see an account of the above skirmishes perhaps before this reaches you.

I stood the marching well very well I carried my Knapsack all the time except when I was with the Hospital train which was 18 days, I haven't used very good language in the above sentence but you must excuse me I can hardley write I have been out of practice so long.

Columbia was a fine place from what the boys tell me, I couldent walk much when I was in Columbia. I had to go hobbling around with a cane. I am sorry to say that most of our boys felt the effects of confiscated whisky. . . .[16]

We have recieved notice of Johns Discharge, I hope he is much better May he soon be able to walk well. . . .

My health was never better. I expect to be at home in the course of 6 months. I look for a hard campaign this summer but there is no use of borrowing trouble.

You know I am not of that stamp I dont mean postage stamp

Orendorff, H H.

Goldsboro N C
March 30th 1865

Wm Orendorff Esq.
Dear Brother

. . . I might relate many of my adventures on my last campaign such as marching rainey days & nights wading of swamps and sloughs & creeks & building corduroy roads sleeping on the wet ground, Foraging baking of Corn Cakes Making of breakfast on Coffee & Meat. Dinner & supper ditto & the substitution of Negro or Black eyed Peas for bread. I will stop this rotine for fear of exciting pity but never mind it is all for the UNION.

This is a very rainey day very disagreeable if a person had to be out, but as luck will have it we are in Camp & not on duty to-day.

Wm I feel my commission has played out as it has not come to hand, I believe the Governor will not promote a Non-commissioned Officer over an Ordly Seargt with sufficient reason being given for such promotion, When they sent on my recommendation I fear they did not state the reason of my promotion over other Non-commissioned officers. Consequently I dont expect a commission now. I am not caring any way our time being so short they can only hold us 6 mos at most. So I expect to wear the three stripes until next fall. . . .

H H Orendorff

Goldsboro N C.
April 2d 1866

W S. Orendorff, Esq
Dear Brother

. . . this pleasant April morning finds us in camp instead of on the "War Path". I would feel much delighted if we could remain in camp during the rest of the term of enlistment but we are a most too good fighters to be left in the rear.

The health of our regiment is good I dont think that there is a sick man in the regiment. Our men are in splendid spirits. We have drawn a sufficient amt of clothing for the first time since we left Scottsboro, Ala 11 months ago yasterday. We are living very well have plenty to eat such as it is Viz. Hd Bread Beef fresh Salt Pork coffee & salt and white-beans. So you see we get no extras to amt to anything yet. We are all expecting another hard and arduous campaign this spring & summer but we think there is no use of borrowing trouble. I think that those fellows that came out last winter and this spring will get to smell the patching. I dont think there is any thing fair about paying them so much Bounty; doe

you? for when we came out they only gave us $13.00 pr month & $100.00 Bounty one months pay the brunt of the battle of allmost three long years or it is 2½ years to-day since we were mustered into the U.S. Service.

It is the impression of the most of us that we will be mustered out in August next but is owing a good deal to how we get along crushing the rebellion. I dont think it can survive a great many more severe shocks.

. . . Washington, those Eastern soldiers are the darndest fools you ever saw, Some of our boys went down to New Bern to guard prisoners those Eastern boys called our boys Shermans greesy raiders and every thing of that kind they could think of. it is true our boys were dirty and ragged for we had been out on the hardest kind of campaign for over two months & hadent an over plus of clothing when we started.[17]

H H Orendorff
3rd Brig 1st Div 15 A C

Goldsboro N C.
April 9, 1865

John Orendorff, Esq
Dear Father

. . . From all appearances we are about to enter upon another Campaign, we may start to-morrow, but I dont think we will start for a few days, one report says that we will not start until Thursday next. I think without a doubt we will move sometime this week. We have but little idea where we are going, We have orders to have constantly on hand 3 days rations and 60 rounds of ammunition, Our transportation is cut down to one team per regiment & a pack mule to each comp. So you see we cant take along much surplus baggage. I suppose we will have a chance to store our extra baggage.

It seems as though we are not a going to get any more rest of account until our time is out which will be something short of 6 months. My health is most excellent I am feeling very well.

We have recently had news of Grants great Victory over Lees hosts,[18] I hope all that we hear from that quarter is true, I think that it will only require time and vigorous Campaigning on our part, to wipe the last vistage of the foul Rebellion

Father I suppose you will have learned before this that I have not received the expected commission as 1st Lt of Comp "F". I must say that I have never been very aspiring, but when we had an election in the camp the boys chose me by quite a majority, I am well satisfied to serve the remainder of my time as Seargt. Our Captain as John can tell you is a very foolish head-strong kind of a fellow but I must say that he has allways been very kind to me. . . .

Yours truly
H H Orendorff

Notes

[1] Sergeant William Penny, Canton; a member of Company G.

[2] Fort McAllister, just south of Savannah, fell on December 13, 1864.

[3] Sherman organized his army into two wings, each comprising two corps; Henry's 15th Army Corps belonged to the right wing. The corps moved on four fairly parallel roads as an independent command without a logistical or communications life line to the rear. *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, Vol. 2, 171-75.

[4] Part of the 103rd Illinois, employed as brigade skirmishers, drove Rebel cavalry through the little town of Griswoldville during the morning of November 22. They were later recalled to join the brigade which occupied a minimally prepared position in an open field. While thus situated, a strong Confederate infantry force appeared and attacked a badly outnumbered Second Brigade. Waiting until the enemy closed to within a short distance, the brigade unleased a devasting sheet of fire at point-blank range. Although subsequent lines replaced the first, they too were repelled, all with heavy losses. The Confederate advantage in numbers was offset by a contest between veteran Union troops and a militia-type force composed of old men and boys. *Reminiscences*, pp. 153-56 and *OR*, Vol. 44, 106-07.

[5] Casualties suffered by the 103rd totalled four killed and eight wounded. *OR*, Vol. 44, 107.

[6] Privates Lewis Anderson and Caleb Moore of Fairview and Corporal Nathan Breed, Canton. There were two Stearns in Company G, Horace and Phineas.

[7] Sergeant David Maxwell hailed from Cuba; he died near Savannah on December 18, 1864. Private Charles Haskin from Fulton County.

[8] Sherman wished the president of the United States a "Merry Christmas" by presenting the city of Savannah as a gift; his army had entered the city on December 21, 1864. Sherman, *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, Vol. 2, 231 and 217.

[9] Sherman's raid through Georgia struck at an area which had previously missed the ravages of war; thus provisions were abundantly available. "Our men are clear discouraged with foraging, they can't carry half the hogs and potatoes they find right along the road." *Reminiscences*, p. 149.

[10] Corporal Abraham DeClerk.

[11] Sherman intended to strike decisively at a remaining bastion of military supplies and Confederate dogma by destroying railroads, provisions, and spirit. His plan directed the army to move with two wings, feinting to confuse the defenders while pointing straight toward Columbia and then on to Goldsboro via Fayetteville. *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, 271 and 274 and John G. Barrett, *Sherman's March Through the Carolinas* (Chapel Hill, 1956), pp. 38-39.

[12] Orendorff is anticipating promotion as a commissioned officer.

[13] The 103rd Illinois began "its" Carolina Campaign on January 30. While employed as skirmishers, it engaged part of Joe Wheeler's forces on February 15; reached Columbia, South Carolina, February 17; crossed the Great Pee Dee River on March 6 and got to Goldsboro on the 25th. The regiment did not participate in the battle at Aversboro and Bentonville, North Carolina. *Reminiscences*, pp. 171-203. Enroute Sherman disguised his plans so effectively that Major Charles Willis noted in his diary entry for March 5: "We think to-day that Goldsboro is our resting place. You must understand that we don't know anything at all about anything." *Ibid.*, p. 192.

[14] Corporal Robert Evans and Sergeant Jesse Hinderleiter both of Fulton County. *Ad-*

jutant General's Report. Vol. 5, 617 and 630.

[15] Whether deserved or not, most of the Union ranks showed a common grudge against South Carolina, holding her largely responsible for starting the war. The 103rd Illinois reflected that attitude of bitterness and desire for reprisal. *Reminiscences*, pp. 175-76.

[16] Major Wills's indictment was sweeping: "Whiskey and wine flowed like water, and the whole Div. is now drunk." *Ibid.*, p. 183.

[17] Union soldiers from both sections of the country were unanimously critical of the other assuming an unquestioned superiority. Western soldiers had a low opinion of Army of the Potomac "bandbox troops." *The Life of Billy Yank*, pp. 321-22.

[18] Lee's Army of Northern Virginia surrendered at Appomattox on April 9, 1865.

8
On Our Road Home

April 21 1865
Camp 103rd Ill Vol In the field (or brush) near Crabtree Creek Wake Co. N.C.

Wm J Orendorff, Esq
Dear Brother

. . . We rejoice to think that Peace is about to crown our protracted labors at The same time deeply mourn the loss of our most excellent President Abraham Lincoln. I would hope that it was a mistake but for the Order of General Sherman & the confirmation of the same by the Raleigh Papers.

I suppose we will be on our road home in the course of 2 or 3 months at most. It is reported that General Sherman is agoing to march his army to Maryland Via Petersburg & Harpers Ferry. if he does it will be a long one but then we can abandon blankets & all extras for the weather is getting warm quite warm.

I am well & fat as a Cub but that dont matter since the White Winged Dove has perched upon our starry Banner.

The rest of the boys from Canton are well I guess. If you hear of me coming up the Shenandoah Valley with a large Army dont be scaried for they are well tamed born and bread upon our backs. In short I mean Graybacks.

We have the Doggest time pulling off Wood Ticks you ever saw but the things are so common aint worth talking about.

I will inform you that I took bathe in Crabtree Creek near the Powder mill. Well I am well. It is raining & I will have to quit.

Orendorff Searg Co F
103rd Ill Vol

Near Raleigh N C
Apr 23d 1865

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

. . . The Boys are generally well and in good spirits, We all feel that we have done our duty and full proposition of Labors and hard fighting to subdue the Rebellion I would like to see all the high officials and leaders of the Confederacy severely punished, Since it has been the will of our Father in Heaven to remove our Noble Lincoln. I hope and trust that his successor Andrew Johnson will deal severely with the rebbel leaders.

The News of the Assassination of our President cast deep gloom over our camps Every soldier looked on as the best friend we had, Many of the opposite

party have remarked as follows. "I feel that I have lost the very best friend I had. . . ."

I guess you did think my letter a long time getting around, but you must learn to put your confidence in Gen Sherman as we have done.

We are of the impression that Johnston has surrendered,[1] and in all probability we will on our way home in the course of 10 or 15 days but you must not look for us for 2 or 3 months at most. One rumor is to the effect that we will march to the state of Maryland and the other is that we will only march to Weldon in this state. I believe that it is 91 miles to Weldon and about 300 to any point that we would strike in Maryland. . . .

I want to get home before the 4th of July if possible I think I could enjoy the occasion hugely. . . .

While I am writing Rockhold is laying on our bunk reading Tennyson's Poems, He aint as fat as I am.

Wm Gibson feels well on the approach of Peace he has not been very rugged for the last year or eighteen months; Jake is well and fat. . . .

On the day that your letter was dated we left Goldsboro, marched East and North about 18 miles, our cavalry skirmished with the rebbel cavalry more or less all day & at night we went into camp right under the Jonnies noses a thing that we seldom do on the march Our regt had to go on skirmish Picket that night, We had to keep our cloathes shoes and accourterments all on. I faired better than most of the boys for I had been in charge of some men on the flank and such duty is equivalent to Picket, in the morning the Johnnies had all disappeared.[2] We got breakfast & moved out at daylight. . . .

H H Orendorff

Near Raleigh NC April 26th 1865

Wm

. . . We have no reliable news from the "front" but many rumors We thought last eavening that we would move onto the enemy this morning but have no orders yet I believe. We all deeply morn the loss of our good honest and patriotic President but we feel at the same time that the Allmight took this plan to more fully expose those vile Traitors, May the Lord inflict due punishment on the whole rebel crew, as you say we have good and noble men at the helm that we hope will deal with the traitors according to our laws.

I have seen "NY" papers of 19th & 21st from all accounts our nation is in deep mourning for our late President.

Report is that Rebel Jo Johnston has finally surrendered.[3]

Lt Gen Grant is making Pap Shermans Army a visit he rode down our Color Line yasterday We were on the line and presented arms to him & gave him a hearty cheer (or three cheers) he looks fine After he had passed Maj Gen Howard came along & we gave him the "war yells".

I was somewhat surprised to hear that Bro Washington had drawn a War Prize I wish I was at home. I would go in his place providing he was accepted, If I was in his place I wouldent give much for a Sub in this stage of the game, for he would see no fighting, this thing is near played out,[4] if Johnston was to fight we could whip him with two Corps or the "Army of the Tennessee."

I see that Maxmillan has a notion of leaving Mexico & I think it would be wise of him for we have got our "war spirit" thoroughly aroused,[5] but I think my next campaign will not be for the acquiring of territory but I will flank maneuver and demonstrate and in all probability cause somebody to surrender to Orendorff unconditionally I will take back the territory for maybe I can gain a gr or half section not ginger bread but genuine black soil. . . .

H H Orendorff

Manchester Va May 11th 1865

John Orendorff, Esq
Dear Father & Mother.

I write to you, I write merely to let you know whare I am etc We left Raleigh 29th April marched out 12 miles & laid over Sunday & resumed the march Monday May 1st and arrived at Petersburg May 7 about 1 OC PM. We laid at Petersburg over Tuesday & Wednesday. I stood the march pretty well I suppose we will march to Alexandria We may be mustered out there, but it seems to be prevailing opinion that we will go to Springfield Ills to be mustered out. I think we have done all the fighting that will be required of us.

I am well so is Rockhold & others of your acquaintance The boys are in good spirits. . . .

We expect to be home by the last of June or 1st of July. . . .

My love and best wishes to all.

Continue to write

H H Orendorff

Alexandria Va
May 21st 1865

Wm J. Orendorff
Dear Brother,

I havent written home since we left Manchester Va from the reason that we have hardly been settled down long enough to write. This leaves me well and in good spirits the boys are generally well. I received my shirts the other day in good order tell Sister I am much obliged for them until better paid.

We are going to have a grand review in Washington 23 and 24th inst. We expect to be a set of tiard boys.

Our Division visited Mt Vernon & Tomb of Gen Washington on 19th the same day that we arrived here. I will give you a description of it when I come home

Wm I have got my commission and expect to be mustered on it in a few days I wont make anything by the operation but it is some satisfaction to get it, So you may call me Lt, if you want too.

I have just been making out my Muster-in Roll. I think I will get out when the Regt does if I dont I dont care much allthough I would like to see you all. . . .

Love to all
H H Orendorff

Crystal Springs D C
May 25th 1865

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

. . . You look for us by the 15th June doe you? I am thinking you will be disappointed; if we are mustered out under the present Order we will not be home until the last days of June I am simply giving you my opinion Some of our men and boys think that we will be held until the 2 of October the date of our muster-in as a regiment; My impression is that the 600,000 for the 1862 call will be mustered out soon.

We were all glad to hear of the capture of Jeff Davis the vile Traitor.[6]

. . . Tell the Girls generally that I shall expect a call from them when I come home, but I cant think of sparing my moustache it is a little the nicest thing you ever saw as for color it is a little on the light order. . . .

Corpl White[7] of our company (he is a little fellow) asked me to-day if my sister that made those shirts was married I told him no, he said he wanted you to make him a pair (he was joking) I told him to hand in his order by the way he has promised to come to Canton on the 4th of July if we should get home before that time he is a good boy dont put on much style has good sense etc.

I am glad to hear that Brother John is getting along so well I want to see him very much. . . . It is sad to think of the fate of our late President. President's Johnson's course is highly commendable I think understands how to treat rebbels.

We had a grand review yasterday through the city of Washington You will see full details of the same before this reaches you.

Our camp is in a beautiful grove about 4½ or 5 miles north of the city. . . .

I received my commission as 1st Lieutenant of Comp "F" 103rd regt Ill Vol Infty on 20th it was late coming but I accept it as quite a compliment. . . .

H H Orendorff

Crystal Springs D C.
May 25th 1865

Wm J Orendorff
Canton Illinois
Dear Brother

This pleasant Sabbath finds us in camp near Crystal Springs D C We arrived well and in good spirits notwithstanding the present Order for mustering out soldiers does not reach us. I understand that Maj Gen John A Logan says that we will have to veteran awhile. I am of the impression that we will have one Order to muster out in a few days or weeks at most but all these things take time you know.

. . . We have been fixing up camp a little to-day and my hand cramps so that I cannot write very well but hope you will be able to make out my meaning.

I see by the morning papers that Kirby Smith has surrendered[8] I hope it will prove true if true it may save us a trip to Texas. . . .

Shraf Herr Adgt Lurmond and Oles[9] arrived here a few days ago Frank is looking well so is Shraf.

Benj Rockhold paid us a short visit yasterday he is looking fine We dont look quite as rough as Shermans men doe (or to make a personal comparison) as we doe.

You need not look for us Home very soon not before July or August We may come sooner but I dont think we will I am simply giving my own view of this matter

H H. Orendorff
1st Lt Co "F" 103rd
Ills Vol Infty.

On Board the J R Gilmore
Ohio River June 3d 1865

Wm J Orendorff
Dear Brother

. . . We left Washington on afternoon of 31st May on the Baltimore & Ohio R R. We arrived at Parkersburg Va yasterday about 11 O clock AM and got aboard our preasent steamer about 3 OC PM. We were well treated along the route they had Coffee at several different stations Along the road people greeted us by waving hdkfs papers & flags All seemed glad to see us. At Parkersburg the cond of the road had everything closed up which made our boys a little hostile.

The banks of the Ohio on this Ohio side are lined with eager spectators some of them hollow and ask what regts are aboard Our Regt and 46th Ohio are all that are on this Boat At one place I noticed three young ladies dressed Read

White and blue. Each were dressed in the different color I tell you they looked gay and festive.

I suppose our destination is Louisville Ky However I dont think we will stay there more than two or three weeks at the most I think our soldiering is about done at least I hope so.

I was Discharged and Mustered in at Washington D C. My muster dates from May 20th 1865. On 29th of last mo I was assigned to command of Co "E". I am getting along with the boys very well.

I think we will not stop but a short time at Cincinnati. I understand Benj Rawalt is at Cincinnati I would like much to see him. I saw your bro-in-law B F Rockhold at Washington the day that we left. he is looking well. . . .

I was looking over Shermans Official report yasterday I tell you he came down on Stanton & Hallack I tell you he will come out all clear yet he will shine the brighter for their gross insults, I tell you we are Shermans men and feel for him and will stand by him to the last. . . .[10]

H H Orendorff

Camp 103rd Ill Vol Infty
June 15th 1865

Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

. . . I am well and doing fine live fat feel gay. I have some good news to communiate to you.

Our regt have Orders to muster out immediately. by this you must not look for us to-morrow or next day as the papers may tell you but you may look for us in about 3 or 4 weeks sometime before the midle of July.

I wish it distinctly understood that I am going to have a good time when I come home I hope you will be prepared enjoy some of our good times. . . .

My Love to Father Mother and all. . . .

Love to all the good looking kind and Patriotic Young Ladies

H H Orendorff

Camp 103rd Ill Infty Vol.
June 21st 1865

Miss Maggie Orendorff
Dear Sister

I will write you a short note to-night as you are perhaps anxious to hear from us and keep posted in regard to our coming Home. Well! we are Mustered out of the service to-day or this afternoon about 5 O clock and the supposition is that we will start for Illinois to-morrow sometime I fear we will not get home by the

4th of July but if we doe not we will be Home soon after We have had to work night and day allmost for the last few days in order to get our Rolls out. I do not know our destination yet. It will either be Springfield or Chicago.

I hope you have a good time at your picknick Kiss all the Girls for me and give them My Compliments. . . .

Tell Father I hope to be Home to help him Harvest.

Give my Love and best wishes to Father and Mother. My Love and best wishes to the whole Family. . . .

H H Orendorff

Camp Douglas Chicago Ills
June 24th 1865

Wm J. Orendorff Esq.
Dear Brother

We arrived here this morning 3½ Oclock A M. We had a very rough time coming through from Louisville and a sad accident happened at Logansport Robert Richardson of Co "G" was standing on top of the carrs when we came to a place whare the Telegraph wires crossed the road I suppose he did not see the wire and it jirked him off his head and shoulders struck the ground first he may possibly recover but a good many think his chances slim I hope he may recover for he is a No 1 good Boy, and has made a good soldier.[11]

We had a pretty good reception in Chicago this morning, We got Breakfast at the Soldiers Home and at 10½ Oclock AM we visited the great Sanitary Fair.

We are in Barracks and are about ready to be Discharged I mean we are willing but how soon they will get ready is another thing. I still hope that we will be home by the 4th of July though it will rub us close.

I am feeling very well considering the usage I have had. We had our transportation from Louisville to this place on Hog Cars I tell you it looked rough after soldiering about three years.

I cant think of much to write My love to all. I will be home by the 4th of July if possible.[12]

Notes

[1] Johnston worked out terms with Sherman to surrender his army on April 18, 1865.

[2] The regiment left Goldsboro on April 10 as the whole army pursued Johnston toward Raleigh. *Reminiscences*, pp. 203-05.

[3] Sherman had negotiated very liberal and far reaching surrender terms, including reconstruction policy; thus it was not confirmed by Washington authorities. Discussion continued and surrender achieved on April 26. *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, pp. 528-29.

[4] Apparently Henry's brother Washington was drafted and the question of hiring a substitute was being considered. That seems unlikely, however, since he was crippled.

[5] During the war, the French had intervened in Mexico, forcibly seized control of

Mexico City, and established Maximilian as emperor. This pro-Confederate government did not leave Mexico until 1867. *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, pp. 511 and 649.

[6] The Confederate president was apprehended on May 10 near Irwinville, Georgia.

[7] Elijah White from Cuba.

[8] Writers had anticipated the surrender of the Army of Trans-Mississippi, the last important Rebel military, which occurred the following day. *The Civil War Day By Day*, p. 690.

[9] *The Adjutant General's Report* lists two Oles: Oscar Oles in the 13th Illinois Cavalry and Soloman Oles in the 23rd Illinois Infantry Regiment.

[10] The verbal battle precipitated by Stanton's rejection of Sherman's initial surrender agreement with Johnston continued. Sherman's army had high regard for their leader, "Thinking nothing impossible if Sherman goes with us. . . . I'd rather fight under him than Grant, and in fact if Sherman was Mahomet We'd be as devoted musselmen as ever followed the former prophet. . . ." *Reminiscences*, pp. 169 and 211.

[11] Miraculously, he too survived, *Ibid*, p. 290.

[12] Getting home by the 4th of July was the hope of many Civil War soldiers. This time, good fortune smiled on Lieutenant Henry Orendorff as he and his unit returned to Fulton County on June 30, 1865, amidst a glorious homecoming celebration. *Ibid*, pp. 238-39.

Henry Harrison Orendorff, 1883, age 43 years.

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